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ABSTRACT

This report gives new recognition to the power and potential of the American family to improve education. Following an introduction that looks at the factors inhibiting parental involvement in their children's education, the report reviews 30 years of research indicating that the starting point of American education is parent expectations and parental involvement in their children's education. It then discusses how schools and families can develop partnerships, how the local communities can connect with families and schools, and how businesses can get involved with family support and participation in education. Legislation from different states enacted to help improve family involvement is then discussed, followed by ways that federal policies and programs can be more supportive of families. The concluding section of the report notes the difficulties inherent in such an initiative but observes that the benefits outweigh the difficulties. Over 130 references are included. Also included with the report are: (1) remarks prepared by U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley, announcing the report and the formation of a broad-based partnership led by the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education to encourage and support American families; (2) descriptions of family involvement partnerships, listed by state; (3) a copy of the press release from the Department of Education summarizing Secretary Riley's remarks; (4) a list of statistics related to family involvement; and (5) lists of members of the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education and members of the National Family Involvement Partners network. (HTH)

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STRONG **FAMILIES**, STRONG **SCHOOLS**

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BUILDING

COMMUNITY

PARTNERSHIPS

FOR

LEARNING

A research base for family involvement in learning from the US Department of Education

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The National Education Goals

The National Education Goals, as set out in the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, articulate the desires and needs of Americans for improvement in education over the next several years. In 1989, America's governors and the President met and developed the original 6 goals, and the U.S. Congress added two new goals. The goals have been recognized by every major group of parents, educators, and businesses.

The goals state that by the year 2000:

1. All children in America will start school ready to learn.
2. The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.
3. All students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography, and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our Nation's modern economy.
4. The Nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.
5. United States students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.
6. Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
7. Every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.
8. **Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.**

Strong **Families,** Strong **Schools:**

Building Community Partnerships For Learning

A Research Base for Family Involvement in Learning from the U.S. Department of Education

U.S. Department of Education
Richard W. Riley
Secretary

September 1994

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Strong **Families,** Strong **Schools:**

Building Community Partnerships for Learning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why Make Education a Family Affair?

Eleven years after the landmark report "A Nation at Risk" alerted the American people to the importance of "Parents are a child's first teacher," the vital role that families can play in the education of their children still hasn't received the attention it merits. "Strong Families, Strong Schools" is the national initiative to encourage and support efforts by families to take a more active role in their children's learning.

Thirty years of **research** show that greater family involvement in children's learning is a critical link to achieving a high-quality education and a safe, disciplined learning environment for every student.

- Three factors over which parents exercise authority– student absenteeism, variety of reading materials in the home, and excessive television watching – explain nearly 90 percent of the difference in eighth-grade mathematics test scores across 37 states and the District of Columbia on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Thus, controllable home factors account for almost all the differences in average student achievement across states (Barton & Coley 1992).
- Although math and science performance of American students on NAEP and math scores on the SAT have shown improvement in recent years, NAEP reading scores and SAT verbal scores have remained flat. Reading is more dependent on learning activities in the home than is math or science (The College Board 1994).
- Studies of individual families show that what the family does is more important to student success than family income or education. This is true whether the family is rich or poor, whether the parents finished high school or not, or whether the child is in preschool or in the upper grades (Coleman 1967; Epstein 1991a; Stevenson & Baker 1987; de Kanter, Ginsburg, & Milne 1986; Henderson & Berla 1994; Keith & Keith 1993; Liontos 1992; Walberg, n.d.)
- The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children (Anderson et al. 1985).
- International comparisons show the high academic success of students from Asian countries, which many attribute to the priority their families give to education (Stevenson 1993).

Family involvement could double the public investment in student learning.

- If every parent of a child aged 1 through 9 spent one hour reading or working on schoolwork with his or her child five days a week, American parents would annually devote at least 8.7 billion hours to support their children's reading (U.S. Department of Education 1994a).
- In money terms, if the children's teachers spent the same time one-on-one, the cost to the American taxpayer would be approximately $230 billion more in 1991– about the same as what the American public pays yearly for the entire K-12 public American education enterprise. In practice, however, only half of parents with children under age 9 say they read to them every day (Gorman 1993).

Family involvement is one of the **best long-term investments a family can make.**

- The difference in lifetime earning between a student who did not graduate from high school and one who did is over $200,000. The difference for a student who received a bachelor's degree or more is almost $1 million (The U.S. Census Bureau 1994).

There is **public support** for greater family involvement in learning:

- Forty percent of parents across the country believe that they are not devoting enough time to their children's education (Finney 1993).
- Teachers ranked strengthening parents' roles in their children's learning as the issue that should receive the highest priority in public education policy over the next few years (Louis Harris and Associates 1993).
- Among students aged 10 to 13, 72 percent said they would like to talk to their parents more about schoolwork. Forty-eight percent of older adolescents (14-17 years old) agreed (National Commission on Children 1991).
- Eighty-nine percent of company executives identified the biggest obstacle to school reform as lack of parental involvement (Perry 1993).

But if family involvement is so important, why isn't more of it happening? Aspects of modern life stand in the way.

- **Time.** Both parents and teachers want to do more but are having difficulties arranging the time. For example, two-thirds of employed parents with children under the age of 18 say they do not have enough time for their children.
- **Uncertainty about what to do and their own importance.** Many parents say they would be willing to spend more time on activities with their children if teachers gave them more guidance. Teachers also need guidance, as very few colleges and school systems provide new and experienced teachers with coursework in working with families.
- **Cultural barriers.** Language barriers of immigrant families and communication barriers of English-speaking families who have had little education or bad school experiences limit family-school contact.

- **Lack of a supportive environment.** High rates of poverty and the concentrations of poverty by neighborhood limit student opportunities at home and after school. Many neighborhoods lack easy access to libraries, cultural institutions, health services and recreation.

What Families, Schools, Communities, Businesses and Government Can Do

Families Connecting With Their Children:

There are steps all families can take at home:

- Read together.
- Use TV wisely.
- Establish a daily family routine.
- Schedule daily homework times.
- Monitor out-of-school activities.
- Talk with children and teenagers.
- Communicate positive values and character traits, such as respect, hard work and responsibility.
- Express high expectations and offer praise and encouragement for achievement.

Families can make a difference at their children's schools as well:

- Ensure that their middle and secondary students are offered and enrolled in challenging courses.
- Keep in touch with the school instead of waiting until a problem arises.
- Ask more from schools: high learning standards, more family involvement.
- Use community resources, such as after-school programs and adult education classes.

School-Family Partnerships for Safe Schools and Improved Learning:

Families and schools can team up to make schools safer, a precondition for learning, and the issue which parents currently rate as their number-one concern.

- Establish family-school-community partnerships to make safe schools a priority to improve the learning environment in schools and neighborhoods.
- Help students feel that what they are learning is relevant. Violence is more prevalent when students feel that their classes and grades are unimportant.
- Provide quality early childhood education and combine parent training with a child's preschool education to make lasting changes in that child's prospects for improved conduct, better school behavior, and lessened delinquency.

Families and schools can also team up to improve student learning:

- Expand opportunities for contact using evening and weekend hours for meetings and activities, and help coordinate transportation and child care.
- Provide teachers with a telephone in the classroom.

- Get rid of jargon to clarify communication.
- Make the school grounds and buildings more family-friendly, from having positive school signs welcoming parents to schools to holding student-parent-teacher days at the beginning of each school year and throughout the year.
- Address language barriers with interpreters, translated materials, and bilingual staff.
- Reduce mistrust and cultural barriers. Parent resource centers, workshops, and home visits can help, as can a liaison or parent-teacher outreach team.
- Encourage family learning in homework assignments.
- Encourage parental input in school decisions.
- Use new technology, such as homework hotlines, voice mail, and electronic mail.

Communities Connecting Families and Schools:

- Combat alcohol, drugs, and violence in and around the school and neighborhood.
- Reinforce parenting skills by providing training in parenting and early childhood education, literacy and career training, referrals for services, and other helpful programs.
- Provide mentoring programs so that youth may be assured of tutoring and guidance from responsible adults.
- Enlist community volunteers, including retired and older citizens.
- Offer after-school and summer learning and recreation programs.
- Make health, library, and cultural services easily accessible to the school's neighborhood.
- Encourage parent and school involvement in community councils and special projects.

Family-Friendly Businessess Supporting Learning:

- Promote parent involvement strategies geared to high standards in school, school districts, and state education reform efforts, including matching employee volunteer time in schools with leave time.
- Share with employees promising ideas for encouraging learning to high academic and occupational standards.
- Adopt "family-friendly" policies, such as parenting and literacy training, child care, and flexible leave policies that accommodate school visits and school volunteer activities.
- Assist schools directly, including providing encouragement for employee volunteers, funding for parent involvement projects, and support for reform legislation.

States Encouraging Families and Schools to Work Together:

Many states have passed laws supporting family involvement in education. These include:

- Parent partnership programs that include small grants for new activities, family/school coordinators, parent resource rooms, and other innovations.
- Support for parent education or teacher training.
- Encouragement of broader educational reforms and partnerships with universities and businesses that include families.
- Focus on the preschool years, as in the Missouri Parents as Teachers or the Arkansas HIPPY programs, as well as initiatives that span the range of school grade levels.
- Requirements for the inclusion of parents on school governing boards and parent input in the development of local school policies and the creation of policies on parental involvement.

Making Federal Policies Supportive of Family Involvement:

- President Clinton has directed all federal agencies to "encourage and support the expansion of flexible family-friendly work arrangements, including job sharing; career part-time employment; alternative work schedules; telecommuting; and satellite work locations."
- The National Education Goals and the Goals 2000: Educate America Act now include the promotion of parent involvement as a critical aspect of successful schools.
- The largest federal education program, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, after reauthorization will increase support for activities that encourage involvement of parents in school activities and in their children's schoolwork, including the option of parents and educators to establish pledges or compacts to work together.

The U.S. Department of Education will be a key partner in the national initiative to support family involvement, but other agencies will help. For example:

- The Department of Justice provides technical assistance to state and local education agencies on safety, discipline, violence,and drug prevention.
- The Department of Health and Human Services is funding efforts to coordinate services in communities.
- The Department of Agriculture is preparing an initiative to encourage parents to get involved in ensuring healthy meals at home and in school.
- The Department of Defense, through each service branch, provides families with a number of supports recognized through the official organization structure.

- The Department of Housing and Urban Development is working to establish safe study areas for students and families in housing projects.

Conclusion

The task of connecting families and schools is both formidable and attainable. It is formidable because of the difficult conditions faced by many families today and because of mismatches between the practices of schools, the skills of their staffs, and the needs and circumstances of many students' families.

But there are hopeful signs that connections between schools and families can be made stronger. Whatever their struggles, parents from all walks of life want their children to succeed and want to work with schools to make this happen. Many parents can and do help educate their children for success in school and in the future, and with encouragement and support, many more can do the same.

The schools play a key role in strengthening these connections because of their ongoing relationship with students. But support is needed from all parts of the community, as well as from government at all levels. For the good of our next generation, we must all work together to build on existing efforts, create new approaches, and extend successes to communities across the nation. With long-term commitment and widespread cooperation, we can strengthen families, strengthen schools, and strengthen family-school-community partnerships to help our young people develop the skills and character to be successful, good neighbors, and productive citizens.

INTRODUCTION

Today's young people face challenges and choices that to an older generation often seem unreal. From how we acquire our information to what we do with it, from the multitude of opportunities our children have to the choices they make, ours is a fast-paced world that requires intelligence, character, commitment and creativity to succeed.

Within this rapidly changing society, few areas are as essential to a successful future as education, both as a means of learning basic and advanced skills and as a process for helping to develop responsible, compassionate citizens who are ready to make valuable contributions to their family, community, state, and nation.

It has never been so important for children to receive a high-quality education in order to gain the knowledge and the world-class abilities that will help them achieve in today's competitive international economy. Ensuring that our children not only have a grounding in the basics but also have a commitment to a lifetime of learning will require an agenda for education unlike any we have seen before. To achieve this reform, we are going to have to raise our expectations for our children and for ourselves.

Local communities and states must address their own educational needs and goals and creatively draw upon new resources like the Goals 2000: Educate America Act and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act for the improvement of

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their own schools. These national initiatives encourage academic rigor and challenge all students to achieve to their maximum ability.

But even more important than this new legislation for achieving stronger schools and communities is the commitment we must make to getting families involved in education. Strong families have been a principal source of our country's success in the past, and they will play an essential part in improving the quality of our schools and our communities, and ensuring that what our children learn will carry them to a successful future.

Family involvement should be a special focus of any successful school improvement effort. Partnerships between schools and families are so integral to reaching each of the bipartisan National Education Goals that Congress added a new goal that recognizes the primacy of parents and families in children's learning and calls on every school to promote partnerships that will increase family participation.

Three decades of research have shown that parental participation improves students' learning. This is true whether the child is in preschool or the upper grades, whether the family is rich or poor, whether the parents finished high school (Coleman et al. 1966; Epstein 1991a; Stevenson & Baker 1987; de Kanter, Ginsburg, & Milne 1986; Henderson & Berla 1994; Keith & Keith 1993; Liontos 1992; Walberg, n.d.). International comparisons show the high academic success of students from Asian countries, which many attribute to the priority their families give to education (Stevenson 1993).

A parent is a child's first and most important teacher, and a great deal of learning occurs before children begin school. By age three, for example, children have acquired more than half the language they will use throughout their lives (White 1987). Parents can help their preschool children learn by reading to them and by looking at every interaction with their child, even grocery shopping or watching television, as a learning experience. When children enter kindergarten, they receive their first exposure to formal education. As children go through elementary school, parents need to support the learning that goes on in the classroom and to help their children form good study habits. Reading and writing at home and at school are areas of particular importance.

In middle school, pressures from peers and the teen culture grow. Parents can help children continue to see the significance of schooling and make sure their children take challenging courses to prepare for high school and beyond. At a time when many young people feel overwhelmed by the changes in their lives and by real and perceived pressures, parents can offer some focus, both in terms of career options and guidance and the sequence of challenging academic and/or occupational courses that need to be taken in eighth through twelfth grades. Families can send a powerful signal by attending activities in which their children and youth are participating.

Simply put, family involvement in education is too important to ignore if we really want to create a stronger, safer, and more enriching future for our children.

Happily, most Americans have a strong desire to improve their schools and to help their children achieve more than they did. And many of the parents,

teachers, students, and businesses recognize the need for such involvement.

- Forty percent of parents across the country believe that they are not devoting enough time to their children's education (Finney 1993).
- Teachers ranked strengthening parents' roles in their children's learning as the issue that should receive the highest priority in public education policy over the next few years (Louis Harris and Associates 1993).
- Among students aged 10 to 13, 72 percent said they would like to talk to their parents more about schoolwork; 48 percent of older adolescents (14 to 17 years old) agreed (National Commission on Children 1991).
- Eighty-nine percent of company executives identified the biggest obstacle to school reform as a lack of parental involvement (Perry 1993).

But if family involvement is so important, why isn't more of it happening? Several aspects of modern life stand in the way:

Time. With the rise in two-breadwinner families, one-parent families, and the need for family members to hold more than one job, families have many demands on their time. Perhaps it is not surprising that 66 percent of employed parents with children under 18 say they do not have enough time for their children (Families and Work Institute 1994). For example, many children are left at home alone, unsupervised or watching television for hours a day. Working parents are often faced with trying to complete all household duties in the limited time available. Teachers also are strapped for time. Although some would like to make home visits to families or talk more with students' parents, many teachers are parents themselves and have families to attend to.

Uncertainty about what to do. Many parents today are unsure how to help their children learn (National Commission on Children 1991). Some are simply not prepared to be parents. The number of teenage parents has risen dramatically in recent years (Snyder & Fromboluti 1993). Other parents may have had bad experiences with school themselves and are reluctant to return to school even as a parent, or they may feel intimidated and unsure about the value of their contributions compared with those of a teacher. Yet many parents say they would be willing to spend more time on homework or other learning activities with their children if teachers gave them more guidance (Epstein 1987; Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms 1986). But teachers also need guidance. Although teacher certification requirements in about half the states mention the importance of working with families, very few states require extensive coursework or in-service training in working with families (Radcliffe, Malone, & Nathan 1994). Few teacher preparation programs address techniques for communicating with families, and many teachers and other school staff may simply not know how to go about involving parents more in their children's learning.

Cultural barriers. The families of the children being educated in America's schools today are extremely diverse. Many immigrant families do not speak or understand English. This language barrier may be a special problem for low-income families who have little or no education themselves. The 1980s saw the

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number of poor Hispanic and Asian immigrant children increase dramatically (Morra 1994). Families also have different views on schools, teaching, and their own role in their children's education. Teachers may be unable to communicate with non-English-speaking parents. Even those family members who speak English but have little education often have difficulty in communicating with schools because their life experiences and perspectives are so different (Comer 1988; Moles 1993).

Lack of a supportive environment. Nurturing families has not been a priority on the American agenda. More and more parents face the difficult task of raising their children alone. More children than at any time since 1965 live in poverty (Children's Defense Fund 1994). Low-income parents have less contact with schools than do their better-off counterparts (Moles 1993). They need support from all sectors of the community if they are to become more involved in their children's education. Schools need to establish clear school do and district policies on family involvement and reach out to all parents on a continuing basis, providing personal contact, literature and classes on parenting, literacy training, and parental resource centers. Religious and civic organizations need to encourage parents as they guide the growth of their children. Communities also must work with families to make the streets safe for children and provide constructive after-school and summer experiences. Employers need to be supportive of their employees who are parents, allowing more flexibility in work schedules as well as more options for part-time employment.

Thus, although the family's role in children's learning is as important today as it was 30 years ago, the circumstances affecting family life have greatly changed. To overcome these challenges, we need to support family involvement; we must foster a partnership among parents, children, teachers, schools and the community to improve learning. Getting families involved is not easy. It will require hard work and changes in attitudes.

U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley has proposed a Family Involvement Partnership — an initiative that brings together an informal coalition of groups and individuals dedicated to increasing family involvement in learning and placing it high on the American agenda. This paper supports that effort to improve family involvement by providing a review of the past 30 years of research evidence that shows the importance of involving families in their children's learning and by offering examples of family involvement efforts that are working. The paper suggests concrete ways in which different participants in this partnership—families, schools, communities, businesses, and governments — can help achieve success.

Greater family involvement is crucial if our students are to learn more, to achieve higher academic standards, and to succeed in a world that might otherwise pass them by. To change our education system significantly requires more than just legislative solutions. It requires the participation of strong families, with their structure, values and moral compass.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Families can help their children both at home and at school. When families are involved in their children's education in positive ways, children achieve higher grades and test scores, have better attendance at school, complete more homework, demonstrate more positive attitudes and behavior, graduate at higher rates, and have greater enrollment in higher education (Henderson & Berla 1994; Becher 1984). Parents can emphasize good work habits, value learning and good character, set high expectations for their children, stay informed about their children's progress, and monitor their children's activities.

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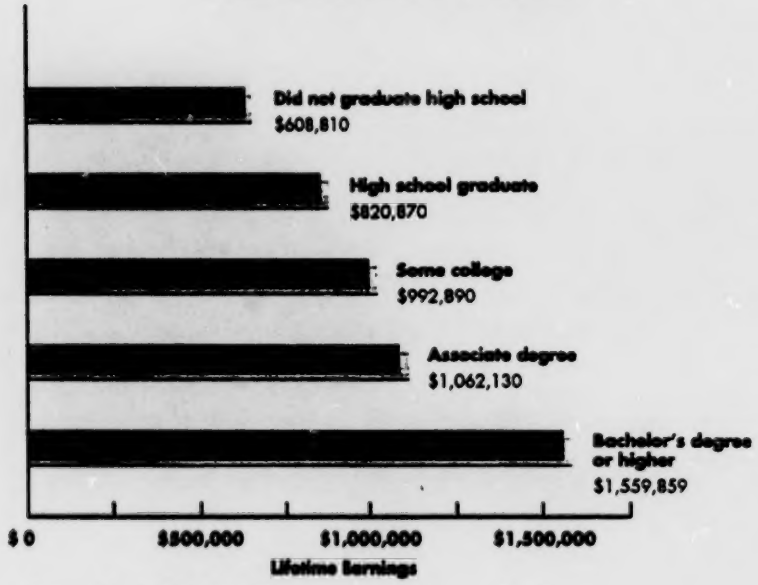
Although most studies have focused on younger children, the benefits of involvement can extend far beyond the preschool and elementary school years (Henderson 1987). For high school youth, parents can monitor homework and encourage participation in wholesome extracurricular activities, provide a sense of proportion to TV watching and video games, talk often to teachers, be active in parent-teacher associations, and help their children develop plans for careers and further education.

Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress support the efforts of families at home. Three factors over which parents can exercise authority—student absenteeism, variety of reading materials in the home, and excessive television watching—account for nearly 90 percent of the difference in the average state-by-state performance of eighth-graders' mathematics test scores

Your Child's Education is Your Best Investment

Lifetime Earnings Increase with Education



Source: The U.S. Census Bureau 1994.

among 37 states and the District of Columbia. In other words, most of the differences in achievement observed across states can be attributed to home practices. This means that families can improve their children's achievement in school by making sure their children attend school regularly, encouraging their children to read at home regularly, and turning off the TV (Barton & Coley 1992).

Studies also show a strong relationship between the number of higher-level courses taken and student achievement and college entrance test scores. Parents, with the assistance of the school guidance counselor, can encourage their children to take the appropriate preparatory courses in middle and junior high school (i.e., algebra, keyboard skills) and challenging sequences of courses in high school (i.e., chemistry, calculus, third and fourth years of the same foreign language, advanced placement courses, and advanced technology and computer courses).

What families do to help their children learn is more important to their academic success than how well-off the family is (Walberg, 1984). A national study of eighth-grade students and their parents shows that parental involvement in students' academic lives is indeed a powerful influence on students' achievement across all academic areas (Keith & Keith, 1993). Higher achievement results, in part, from the increased amount of homework completed by students with families who are more involved in their education.

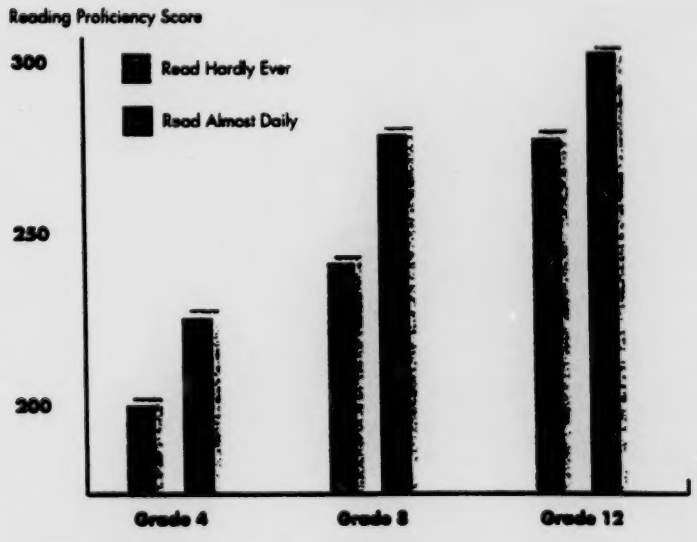
Parents benefit as well. They develop a greater appreciation of their role in

their children's education, an improved sense of self worth, stronger social networks, and even the desire to continue their own education. They also come to understand more about their schools and teaching and learning activities in general (Davies 1988; Henderson & Berla 1994, Lionto 1994). Teachers report that they are encouraged by strong support from involved parents to raise their expectations for both children and parents.

Research and accounts of good practice point out many steps all families can take to improve the learning environment at home:

Read together. Although math and science performance of American students on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and math scores on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) have shown improvement in recent years, NAEP reading scores and SAT verbal scores have remained basically the same. Reading is more dependent on home learning activities than is math or science (Mullis et al. 1994; College Board 1994). Children's success in school can be linked to reading to children and listening to them read. The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children (Anderson et al. 1985). If every parent of a child aged 1 through 9 spent one hour reading or working on schoolwork with the child 5 days a week, American parents would annually devote at least 8.7 billion hours to supporting their children's reading. In money terms, if the child's teacher spent the same one-on-one time, the cost to the American taxpayer would be around $230 billion—about the same as what the American public pays yearly for the entire American K-12 public education enterprise (U.S. Department of Education 1994a).

Students' Frequency of Reading for Fun Strongly Predicts Academic Achievement



Sources: Mullis et al. 1993.

Coming of Age:
The Special Needs of Middle-School Students and Teenagers

The special challenges involved in making the transition from childhood to adulthood can be disturbing, even overwhelming, for children, parents, schools, and communities. Beginning at about age 10 or 11, children face physical, emotional, social, and educational changes. Growth spurts, mood swings, the need for acceptance (by peers and others), the search for identity, and the desire for independence and maturity can lead to risk taking, conflict, and confusion as well as to enthusiastic exploration of new activities and associations. Preteens and teenagers need help from parents, teachers, and other adults to make responsible choices within reasonable limits.

For parents, the following actions are key:

- Parents who set healthy limits for their children without being rigidly authoritarian help their children mature socially and succeed academically.
  - Be aware that successful limit setting includes clearly defining the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behavior, establishing consequences, and standing by your word.
  - Expect children to test limits (it's part of their growth process). But by following through on the consequences for breaking the rules you set up, you will help your children trust you.
  - Be firm but fair by taking into consideration children's need to take more responsibility, to understand the reasons for rules, and to express their opinions. Setting limits is a sign of respect, for your children and for yourself.
- Children benefit from being involved in family chores and decision making, and from discussing and helping to set family rules.
- Despite the difficulties of scheduling and competing family needs, parents need to remain involved in their children's education:
  - Encourage (but don't battle over) homework completion.
  - Get to know teachers and administrators before any problems arise, and stay in contact with them regularly.
  - Talk to children about their school experiences and encourage them to take challenging courses.
  - Become familiar with school policies and issues.
- Parents can network with other parents:
  - Get to know the families of your children's friends.
  - Work with other parents to address issues of concern at school and in the community.

For more information, see Elkind 1993 and Berla, Henderson, & Kerewsky 1989.

In practice, however, only half of parents with children under age 9 say they read to them every day, and only 13 percent read with their children aged 9 to 14 daily (Gorman 1993). Parents can also take their children to the library, help them get a library card, and help them find books on their interests and hobbies. The availability of reading material in the home, whether owned or borrowed from the library, is directly associated with children's achievement in reading comprehension (Lee & Croninger 1994).

Use TV wisely. Most parents (73 percent) want to limit their children's television viewing (Finney 1993), but parents who are at work or occupied elsewhere cannot easily do this. Forty-four percent of seventh-graders recently reported watching three or more hours of television a day (Puma et al. 1993). Although moderate amounts of viewing do not interfere with schoolwork, academic achievement drops sharply for children who watch more than 10 hours a week, or an average of 2 hours a day (U.S. Department of Education 1987). The quality of the television programs selected is also a concern. Although the evidence is not conclusive, possible effects on children who view television violence include less sensitivity to the pain and suffering of others, greater fear of the world around them, and increased likelihood of engaging in aggressive or harmful behavior (Murray & Connborg 1992). Families can limit the amount of viewing, help children select educational programs, watch programs together, and discuss them (ERIC 1990).

Establish a daily family routine. Studies show that successful students have parents who create and maintain family routines (Clark 1988; U.S. Department of Education 1987). Routines generally include time for doing homework, doing chores, eating meals together, and going to bed at an established time. Routines are important to make life predictable and satisfying for all family members. Discussion of daily events at mealtimes, for example, is an important routine.

The informal education that takes place in the family is not merely a pleasant prelude, but rather a powerful prerequisite for success in formal education from the primary grades onward.

Urie Bronfenbrenner,
developmental psychologist,
Cornell University

Schedule daily homework times. Students with low test scores who spend substantial time on homework get as good grades as students with more ability who do no homework (U.S. Department of Education 1987). Spending more

time on homework has the greatest effect in the upper grades (Cooper 1989). Parents can help by setting a regular time for homework each day; providing a quiet, well-lit place for study at home or encouraging children to study at a local library; and discouraging distractions from phone calls, radio, and television. Parents can encourage all children's efforts to learn, be available for questions, and spend time discussing what was learned. A parent does not have to know all the answers; demonstrating an interest is more important. Students can call on other family members, teachers, or librarians if more help with a certain subject or assignment is necessary.

Monitor out-of-school activities. Families can help children spend time constructively by guiding the use of leisure time, including time spent in TV viewing and time spent with friends. For example, regular phone calls from a working parent to an older child at home each afternoon can keep parents informed about and involved with their children's plans and activities. Monitoring after school activities may also be important in curbing sexual activity, drinking, and drug use by adolescents, especially where drugs and violence are serious concerns in the neighborhood. Positive extracurricular community activities can be learning experiences and fill idle time (U.S. Department of Education 1990). Community youth organizations, religious groups, arts and cultural institutions, school clubs, colleges and universities, and after-school programs should all be viewed as resources to help families and children.

Talk with children and teenagers. Children and adults can learn a great deal about each other just by talking about their daily lives, current events, family history, and other common interests. Studies show that frequent, open family discussions are associated with higher student achievement (Barton & Coley 1992, Epstein 1991a; Leler 1983, Singer et al. 1988). Parents can get to know the friends of their teenagers, discuss school and outside activities with them, keep teenagers involved in family activities, and stress the importance of teenagers as role models to younger siblings. An important part of discussion is listening; parents need to listen to and acknowledge their children's concerns and worries in order to help their children resolve them more effectively.

Communicate positive behaviors, values, and character traits. Families are still the most important influence on children's lives (Ingrassia 1993). Talking directly to teenagers about sex, drugs, and alcohol is one way to save their lives. Values instilled by parents—honesty, belief in the work ethic, responsibility for one's actions, and religious principles—are twice as important for school achievement as family economic or educational background (Hanson & Ginsburg 1985). By talking about the importance of these values, parents help their children learn to make good decisions. By acting on such values, parents serve as important role models to their children.

Express high expectations for children and offer praise and encouragement for achievement. Parents need to set high standards for their children's schoolwork and to encourage the children to work hard to achieve those standards. Standards should be realistic, however, or students may be inclined to

give up (Scott-Jones 1984). Families who praise children's skills and efforts, show interest and concern, and reward success tend to have children who are successful in school (Clark 1990). Parents who demonstrate warmth and also set limits have children who are more socially and academically skilled than do parents who emphasize mainly the warmth or the limits (Baumrind 1989).

Families can make a difference by the things they do with the school as well. Here are some ways:

Ensure challenging coursework for middle and secondary school students. Parents have a responsibility to encourage their children's school to offer and enroll students in a challenging sequence of courses in preparation for postsecondary education and a promising career. Taking "gatekeeper" courses, such as algebra and geometry, early in the high school experience is strongly associated with college enrollment. The differences in college enrollment rates between white and minority students are virtually nonexistent among the students who took both algebra and geometry in high school (Pelavin & Kane 1990; Pelavin Associates 1993). For students in special education, a strong transition plan can help them succeed in the world beyond school. Research shows that a comprehensive program of challenging courses, high standards, and career counseling will improve the likelihood that students will be academically successful. In addition, the integration of vocational and academic education appears to be a promising instructional strategy to help students understand abstract concepts through real-world situations. Parents can also encourage the school to provide on-the-job training and internships in vocational activities for students who are not headed for postsecondary education.

Keep in touch with the school. Families who are consistently informed about their children's progress at school have higher-achieving children (Henderson & Berla 1994). The partnership between parents and teachers is key to creating a

Parents have to understand the hierarchy of education. If the principal isn't responsive, then go higher. Go to the superintendent. Go to the division of high schools or the community school board. Participate in your community school board elections, which not enough parents do at all, especially in the big cities. They have to understand that there are individuals who are higher up that are accountable to them.

Andrea Schlesinger,
student representative,
New York City Board of Education

climate at home and at school that is conducive to learning. Parents cannot afford to wait for schools to tell them how children are doing. Visiting the school and talking to teachers or having a phone conversation are good steps. Parents need to check on whether their children are assigned meaningful homework in appropriate amounts and are challenged to do their best. If children are not being challenged academically, families need to find out how they can change this situation.

Ask more from schools. To keep informed about and involved in what is going on at their children's school, families can work with the school to incorporate new ways to get more involved. Some examples are establishing homework hotlines, volunteering on school planning and decision-making committees, and creating family resource centers (Moles 1993). Parents also have a responsibility to insist that schools raise the standards of education, educate their children at a world-class level, and work toward achieving the National Education Goals. Parents should compare their school's goals and standards against the National Education Goals and against emerging academic and occupational standards.

Use community resources. Using community resources includes taking advantage of local enrichment programs and mentors and seeking community services when needed. Family-oriented community resources may include health care services, housing assistance, adult education and family literacy, employment counseling, and exposure to arts and cultural institutions. Youth-oriented community resources include after-school and summer learning programs, recreation centers and sports teams, community service activities, and religious youth groups. High-achievers are more likely than other students to participate in activities and to know persons who can buffer family and community difficulties (Clark 1990).

Encourage your employer to get involved. Parents can encourage their employers to play a proactive role in the education of their children. Businesses can adopt policies that allow families to spend more time in their children's schools; form partnerships with schools; donate money, supplies, or expertise; or sponsor career exploration days for students. Businesses can also become part of a school-to-work program and encourage employees to serve as mentors to help introduce students to various occupations.

Families can take many actions at home, with the schools, and in the community to strengthen their children's academic achievement. When families have difficulty doing what is needed, schools, organizations in the community, and religious institutions can help provide assistance and draw families into partnerships around common concerns.

SCHOOL-FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

Schools must become places where families feel wanted and recognized for their strengths and potential. Too often families do not feel welcome, a fact that the president of the National Education Association, Keith Geiger, has acknowledged: "The sad fact is that in many instances parents don't feel as if we welcome them in school" (Education Daily 1994). Schools that help families feel welcome and show them how to improve learning at home are likely to have more support from parents and motivated students (Bempechat 1992; Epstein 1991a).

The role of parents in the education of their children cannot be overestimated. By becoming involved in their local school community, parents can provide the essential leadership which will lead to improvements in educational opportunities for their children.

Studies show that school practices to encourage parents to participate in their children's education are more important than family characteristics like parental education, family size, marital status, socioeconomic level, or student grade level in determining whether parents get involved.

The School and Community

Say No to Violence

One example of a high school that is working with families and community members to eradicate violence and gang activities in their school is Robert E. Lee High School in Houston, Texas. Three years ago Lee had a serious gang problem. Then, two things happened. The city of Houston initiated a school-day curfew. Parents of students found on the street and violating the curfew were fined $200. Lee High implemented a "zero tolerance for gangs in the school" policy. Administrators combed the neighborhoods, sat on stoops with families, and "cut contracts" with parents or other family members regarding the zero tolerance for gangs policy.

A core group of 10 teachers, administrators, Houston Police Department officers, and Houston Independent School District security guards worked to identify gang members and take any necessary steps to evict them from the school if they were violent offenders. Key teachers and administrators were trained to identify gang members rather than "wanna-bes" who could easily be alienated enough to take up gang activity if misidentified. By identifying true gang members and supporting the city policy of keeping kids in school, citizens in the community were willing to take the steps necessary to keep them off the streets.

The climate of the school has changed dramatically. State test scores on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) at Lee High School have steadily improved over the last 3 years. Yet, last year, the Texas Education Agency identified it as one of 500+ "low-performing" schools. Things are turning around, however. The principal of Lee High began a recent staff meeting by saying, "We can now concentrate on our academic problems, not our sociological ones." Pre-TAAS test scores show a 100 percent increase in the passage rate to almost 70 percent. In the spring 1994 semester, for the first time, an Honors English class was established that is teaching minority students how to compete in Advanced Placement classes.

Studies show that school practices to encourage parents to participate in their children's education are more important than family characteristics like parental education, family size, marital status, socioeconomic level, or student grade level in determining whether parents get involved (Dauber & Epstein 1993). At the same time, schools need to make a concerted effort to help low-income families become involved, because they often wait for an approach from the school. Such families may also have increasing difficulty in helping children with their academics as children advance in age and in grade (Lee & Croninger 1994). Children from low-income families who are at risk of failing or falling

behind can succeed academically if their parents are taught home teaching techniques (Radin 1969, 1972; Bronfenbrenner 1974; Scott & Davis 1979). Unfortunately, both the quality and quantity of parental contacts with the school decline as children get older. During the first grade, 52 percent of the interactions between families and schools are positive (relating to their child's good academic performance) and only 20 percent are negative (relating to their child's poor academic performance). But by the seventh grade, the proportion of positive contacts drops to 36 percent, and the proportion of negative contacts rises to 33 percent. The proportion of parents serving as school or classroom volunteers drops as well, from 33 percent of first-grade parents to 8 percent of seventh-grade parents (Puma, Jones, Rock, & Fernandez 1993).

For partnerships to work, there must be mutual trust and respect, an ongoing exchange of information, agreement on goals and strategies, and a sharing of rights and responsibilities. Some schools have established pledges or compacts—written agreements among students, parents, and school staff to work together to increase learning. Principals should create an environment in which teachers and staff make parents feel like full partners. But many teachers say that although they would like to work more with families, they simply do not have enough time in the day. They need to be given the time and training to work with families (U.S. Department of Education 1994b).

Safe schools and a disciplined classroom setting are preconditions for learning. Concern for these issues is overwhelming. Parents and the general public rate the growth of fighting, violence and gangs, and poor discipline as the biggest problems facing American schools in 1994 (Elam, Lowell, & Gallup 1994).

Over the past 10 years, threats and injuries to students and the theft and vandalism of student property have remained at steady but high levels (National Education Goals Panel 1993). It has been reported that nearly 3 million thefts and violent crimes occur on or near school campuses every year. This equates to almost 16,000 incidents per school day, or one every six seconds (Bastian & Taylor 1991). While the exact number of weapons brought into schools is not known, surveys indicate that approximately 20 percent of all students in grades 9-12 reported they had carried a weapon at least once during the previous 30 days, and many of these weapons find their way into schools.

Children themselves recognize the problem. Nearly one-fourth (23 percent) of America's public school students say they have been the victim of an act of violence in or around school. An almost identical group (22 percent) are somewhat worried or very worried about being hurt by someone else when they are in or around school (Louis Harris and Associates 1993). Serious discipline problems are more common than violence in the schools, however. Forty-four percent of teachers surveyed nationwide reported that student misbehavior interfered to a considerable extent with their teaching (U.S. Department of Education 1993a).

There are concrete actions that schools and families can take to make their schools safer and classrooms more disciplined:

Establish family-school-community partnerships. Schools and communi-

ties that make safe schools a priority can make a difference in the lives of families in the adjacent neighborhoods which can in turn make a difference in the school climate. Some neighborhoods characterized by high housing density, high residential mobility, high percentages of single-parent families, and neighborhood economic decline may especially need a community strategy. These conditions make it difficult for residents to transmit positive values in natural interactions to the younger generation as neighbors are no longer able to distinguish local youth from those outside the area, and parents often do not band together to solve common problems, participate in voluntary organizations and friendship networks, and undertake neighborhood watches (National Research Council 1993). While not an easy task, it can be done. The former principal at Spry Elementary School in inner-city Chicago launched a coordinated approach to address safety concerns in the surrounding community. Neighbors joined together to evict undesirable neighbors involved in illegal activities, abandoned lots were converted into supervised playgrounds, a preschool program was organized in the school building after elementary grade classes were dismissed, and after-school recreational activities for children and parents were begun (Designs for Change 1993).

Make learning relevant to children. Student attitudes can foster violence. Violence has been shown to be more prevalent where students felt their classes did not teach them what they wanted to learn, did not consider their grades important, did not plan to go to college, and felt they had no control over their lives (U.S. Department of Education 1993a). Students who make poor grades are more likely to be discipline problems and to commit violent acts. Indeed, students with poor grades are three times more likely than all students to threaten someone with a gun or knife and four times more likely to threaten a teacher (Louis Harris and Associates 1993). There are connections that schools, families, and communities can make to address these attitudes. Schools can make schoolwork interesting and relevant to children's lives outside of the school by making real-world connections to future opportunities and aspirations. Communities can offer activities that build on students' interests and teach them self-reliance and responsibility.

Emphasize early childhood education. Aggressive behavior in young children is related to later misconduct. This factor suggests that connecting children with family and community early on in positive ways is integral to violence prevention. Programs that attempt to make large and lasting changes in a child's prospects for improved conduct, better school behavior, and lessened delinquency do make a difference. The Perry Preschool Project in Ypsilanti, Michigan; the Parent-Child Development Center in Houston, Texas; the Family Development Research Project in Syracuse, New York; and the Yale Child Welfare Project in New Haven, Connecticut, are illustrative of such programs sharing the common features of dealing with low-income and often minority families. Each program intervened during the first five years of a child's life and followed up with them for two to five more years. They combined family involvement and parent training with preschool education for the child, and home visits were a component in each. These programs produced less fighting, impulsiveness, disobedience,

restlessness, cheating, and delinquency among children (Wilson 1994).

Schools can take a number of steps to promote partnerships with families. These can ease teachers' responsibilities or give them better ways to relate to parents.

Recognize the disconnection. While many parents have strong feelings of support for the schools their children actually attend, with 70 percent of all public school parents giving their children's school a grade of A or B, there still is a strong feeling of disconnection with public education in general (Elam, Lowell, & Gallup 1994). Many families feel that their interests are not fully taken into account by educators. At times, parents feel that educators talk down to them or speak in educational jargon they do not understand, while the majority of teachers feel that parents need to be more engaged in the education of their child (Peter D. Hart 1994). Educators need to be willing to recognize the extent of this disconnection as a precondition for involving families in their children's education. Schools should make every effort to communicate with parents straightforwardly and simply. To ensure that all parents have access to information, written material should be clear, concise, and easily readable. Some schools' newsletters for parents actually include a glossary of terms to help parents understand school improvement efforts.

Train teachers to work with parents. Schools and school systems seldom offer staff any formal training in collaborating with parents or in understanding the varieties of modern family life. However, both the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers are working to make such information and skills widely available. As explained in the previous section, there are myriad ways for families to become more involved in schools, and training can help teachers and other school staff change the traditional images of contacting parents only when a student is in trouble or when the school needs help with a bake sale. Teacher training programs can include general information on the benefits of and barriers to parental involvement, information on awareness of different family backgrounds and lifestyles, techniques for improving two-way communication between home and school, information on ways to involve parents in helping their children learn in school and outside, and ways that schools can help meet families' social, educational, and social service needs. Individual schools can provide training to current school staff, teacher training programs can expand the range of courses taught and required, and states can change the requirements for teaching certification (Shartrand, Krieder, & Erickson-Warfield in press).

Reduce distrust and cultural barriers. Often the first time a parent comes to school is when a child is in trouble. Schools can reduce distrust and cultural barriers between families and teachers by arranging contacts in neutral settings. These might include using resource centers, offering informal learning sessions, conducting home visits by family liaison personnel, and holding meetings off school grounds. Since the first contact a parent has with his or her child's school is often negative, some districts are making sure the first contact with parents is a positive one. The city of Tacoma, Washington, has adopted a parent training

program that prepares parents to participate in child-parent-teacher days at the beginning of each school year prior to the first day of classes (Lewis 1994). Schools can help reduce distrustful feelings between families and schools by making school signs and initial contacts with parents more friendly and respectful. Many times the first thing parents see when they walk into a school is a sign ordering "Report to the main office,"-- not a statement that makes parents feel welcome. Because such distrust can run deep, however, more comprehensive approaches are often needed.

The School Development Program created by James Comer (1988) is an excellent program designed to reduce barriers between the school and home. It assumes that many poor families and middle-class staff in schools are distrustful of each other. To counter this situation, the program attempts to engage parents in the schools through (1) encouraging parents to participate on a governance and management team that plans academic programs and improvements to school environment; (2) teaching parents how to help their children learn; and (3) sponsoring workshops, dinners, and other school events that bring parents and school staff together. These programs can improve student achievement and behavior in school and encourage families to become more involved in their communities by taking a greater interest in local elections and using community services that they previously distrusted. The program is now in operation in 375 school districts in 19 states across the country.

The largely Hispanic community of McAllen, Texas, has developed a highly effective district- wide family involvement program. Although McAllen had encouraged family involvement for years through federally funded projects such as bilingual education and Chapter 1, family involvement has been greatly expanded. The district budget for parental involvement is no longer solely supported by federal funds. The parental involvement staff consists of parent training specialists at all elementary and secondary schools, and social workers or other staff at secondary schools. Families and teachers at each building are responsible for designing an implementation plan tailored to the needs of the people in that building. Family involvement activities at each school include education programs for parents, school-home communications, volunteer opportunities, home learning, and participation in the parent-teacher organization. Almost all parents in McAllen have some productive contact with their child's school (D'Angelo 1991; Hughes 1994).

Address language barriers. Reaching families whose first language is not English requires schools to make special accommodations. Translating materials into their first language can be useful for these parents, but written communications alone are not enough. Ideally, a resource person, perhaps another parent, would be available who could communicate with parents in their first language either face-to-face or by telephone. Interactive telephone voice-mail systems that have bilingual recordings for families also are useful. The Junior League in Long Beach, California, greatly increased attendance at local PTA meetings by offering concurrent translations in both Spanish and Indochinese languages.

Evaluate parents' needs. Schools can also bridge the distance between families and schools by surveying parents to find out their concerns and opinions

about school. The Linda Vista School in San Diego, California, conducted an extensive parent survey while beginning a comprehensive process to improve the school. To make sure that all families were reached, the school provided the survey in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Hmong, as well as in English. Including families from the beginning of the reform process helped to establish a sense of shared responsibility for school improvement. From this survey evolved the school reform process, which includes all members of the school community. Surveys can be especially helpful to assess further changes needed after a school has implemented a program promoting parental involvement.

Expand opportunities for contact. Many schools hold evening and weekend meetings and conferences before school to accommodate families' work schedules. By remaining open in the afternoons and evenings and on weekends, schools can promote various recreational and learning activities for parents, including adult education and parenthood training, and can create a safe haven against neighborhood crime. The National Education Commission on Time and Learning (1994) recently recommended extended-day and extended-year programs to help American students learn more. The schools in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, are now open from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and there are plans to open a K-8 year-round school. This schedule grew out of a concern by parents and educators about the number of latch-key children in the community. On any given day more than half of the city's 5,000 elementary school students can be found in the extended-day program (National Education Commission on Time and Learning 1994).

These services support the family by making it possible for people to work without worrying because they know their children are involved in constructive learning.

Mayor Joe Jackson,
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Use technology to link parents to the classroom. As much as Americans are eager to get on the Information Highway, getting an old fashioned telephone into every classroom might be one of the most effective ways to improve communication between families and teachers (U.S. Department of Education 1994b). Schools are also using a number of new technologies to communicate with families and students after school hours. One widespread arrangement is a districtwide homework hotline to help guide students with assignments. The United Federation of Teachers in New York City has operated a homework hotline for more than 12 years. In addition, voice mail systems have been installed in several hundred schools across the country. Parents and students can call for taped messages from teachers describing classroom activities and daily homework assignments. In the "Transparent School" model, parents can also leave

Family Resource Centers

Schools that create resource centers devoted to parents' needs signal that parents are welcome in the building. According to a recent study of 28 such centers, they often provide parenting information, conduct classes or workshops for parents, and refer parents to social services and child care. Some centers lend books, tapes, and toys; coordinate home visits; and translate materials into other languages. Three-fourths of the centers sponsored meetings to get parents involved in the governance of schools, and a number also coordinated parent volunteers, and parent tutoring of students (Johnson 1993).

One exemplary center for families is located in downtown Buffalo, New York, in space donated by the Buffalo Urban League. Parents can drop into the center to make use of materials and resources, or they can take part in a number of programs offered by the center, such as classes in basic computer skills. The center offers parents a safe, comfortable, and inviting environment for learning, which is particularly important for parents who do not feel comfortable in a school setting (D'Angelo 1991).

messages for the teacher, and an autodialing system can place calls to any set of parents to convey changes in school- or class-related events or other information (Fruchter, Galleta, & White 1992). Early results from an Indiana evaluation show that with daily messages and active promotion, teacher-parent contact increased by 800 percent. Modest gains in homework completion also were noted (Bauch 1993).

Audiotapes and videotapes also are being used as alternatives to written communication for parents. These are especially helpful in reaching families who do not read. A Chapter 1 project in New York has worked with a local television station to produce a videotape to give parents information about the Chapter 1 program and the role that parents can play. These tapes are made available to parents in more than one language (D'Angelo 1991).

Computers can help improve children's academic achievement and bring families and schools together. Many parent centers include computer classes for parents to improve their education and job skills. The Buddy System Project in Indiana tries to extend learning beyond the classroom by placing a computer in the home of every child in Indiana grades 4-12. The home computer ensures equal access for all children to many resources and advantages afforded in the information age. During the 1994-95 school year, the Buddy System Project will serve more than 6,000 students and their families at 51 sites. Independent evaluations have confirmed the numerous and varied benefits of Buddy participation (Hill 1994).

The number of families who use the Internet is also rapidly growing, and several aspects of Internet services are becoming dedicated to families. The state

of Maryland has initiated a program to offer free Internet connections to all families. Access will be available through Maryland libraries so that all families, even those that do not own a computer, can utilize Internet services (Powledge 1994). The National Parent Information Network (NPIN) is a national electronic information service for parents, parent educators, and others working collaboratively with families. It is being developed by the ERIC Clearinghouses on Elementary and Early Childhood Education and on Urban Education, in partnership with the National Urban League, several local housing projects, the Illinois Parent Initiative and Prairienet (the East Central Illinois Freenet). The NPIN offers a continually-expanding collection of parent-oriented materials (including short articles on child development, education, and health issues) and a question-answering service for parents. Already available to anyone with an Internet connection in the near future, NPIN will also be accessible in parent centers, public libraries, schools, social service agencies, and health clinics (NPIN information 1994).

Another service for families through the Internet is Fathernet, a compilation of information, research, opinion and policy documents related to the involvement of men in the lives of children. Fathernet, which is available through personal modems and the Internet, provides an electronic bulletin board to allow fathers and other men to exchange ideas on the role of men in children's lives (Fathernet information 1994). Another example is the Maine Meeting Place, an electronic network for people with disabilities and their families. Accessible through a phone line, this serves families throughout rural and urban Maine, with special efforts being made to provide low-cost terminals. Access to the network itself is free to all people with disabilities and their families (Maine Meeting Place 1994).

Make going to see the teacher easier. Free transportation and child care can especially encourage families in low-income and unsafe neighborhoods to attend school functions. Native speakers of languages other than English, interpreters, and materials translated in their own language can help non-English-speaking parents participate in the schools more fully. A variety of techniques including letters, phone calls, and visits by program staff may be needed to recruit low-income parents and parents who lack confidence in dealing with the schools (Goodson, Schwartz, & Millsap 1991; Moles 1993).

Establish a home-school coordinator. A parent liaison or home-school coordinator can develop parental involvement programs without adding to the workload of teachers. Programs in 17 sites throughout Tennessee have used home-school coordinators to visit homes routinely and run weekly clubs for parents, helping to build parenting skills and trust between families and schools (Lueder 1989). Personal contacts, especially from people in the community, are important in encouraging hard-to-reach families, including immigrants, to participate (Goodson, Swartz, & Millsap 1991; Nicolau & Ramos 1990). Many of the most effective parent-school partnership programs combine multiple strategies. The League of Schools Reaching Out comprises more than 70 schools in a national network. In order to expand opportunities for school-family contacts,

these schools have developed resource centers for parents in schools, home visiting programs, and mentoring programs (Davies, Burch, & Johnson 1991).

Encourage family learning. Traditional homework assignments can be converted into more interactive ones involving family members. For example, students might interview family members on historical events or their daily work. In the TIPS project (Teachers Involving Parents in Schoolwork), teachers design math and science homework activities that can be sent home regularly for upper elementary students (Epstein & Salines 1992). Parents are encouraged to comment to the teacher on the student's success with each assignment. A number of school systems are working with the TIPS model.

The Family Math and Family Science programs also are used in many states (Family Math in 17, Family Science in 38). These programs place parents and their children together in workshops with stimulating joint activities to learn and use at home. Trainers include other parents, school personnel, and volunteers from churches and community organizations. Studies show that most parents who participated engaged in more learning activities at home with their children, and that more student participants enjoyed science classes (Fruchter, Galleta, & White 1992).

Give parents a voice in school decisions. The parental involvement goal explicitly states, "Parents and families will help to ensure that schools are adequately supported and will hold schools and teachers to high standards of accountability." Many parents, especially those who have limited proficiency in English or who distrust the schools, may be reluctant to get involved to this extent. But this kind of participation is an important component of efforts to increase parental involvement. Schools can give families the opportunity to support the improvement efforts of schools and teachers.

In recent years, a number of school systems have established new governance arrangements. For example, in Chicago each school has an independent council with strong parental participation. In both California and South Carolina, school councils are required to have parental representation.

Another widespread program, Accelerated Schools, aims to eliminate the achievement gap by reordering curriculum, instruction, and school organization in low-performing schools. Parents participate in a steering committee and task forces. Initial evaluations of schools adopting this program indicate strong gains. Begun in California by Henry Levin, university-based centers now develop similar programs in other states (Fruchter, Galleta, & White 1992; Levin 1989). By providing regular information and making seminars and workshops easily available to parents, school staff often facilitate the participatory decision-making process.

Thus many schools are creating new arrangements for working with parents, finding ways to make communication with families more personal and compatible with their needs, drawing on new technologies, and using parents in new ways in the schools. But these new family-school partnerships need continuing support from other members of the society, including community organizations, businesses, and government at all levels.

COMMUNITIES CONNECTING FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS

Forty-eight percent of Americans believe that people need support from their local communities, beyond their immediate families, to help raise their children. This proportion rises to 60 percent when those asked are single parents or lower-income persons (Massachusetts Mutual 1989). Community efforts to strengthen parental involvement can have far-reaching benefits. According to research on this topic, parents who are involved with their children's education are more willing to pay tax money to fund schools. The overall life in a community often improves, and juvenile delinquency may go down. Residents with a greater stake in the community stay longer, and better-educated residents attract higher-paying businesses and increase local tax revenue (Davies 1988; Henderson & Berla 1994).

"It takes an entire village to raise a child."

African proverb

Service organizations and agencies, religious groups, and individual citizens are working to make communities safer and drug free, to reinforce skills related to good parenting, and to encourage people to serve as mentors.

Service organizations and agencies, religious groups, and individual citizens are working to make communities safer and drug free, to reinforce skills related to good parenting, to encourage people to serve as mentors, to extend

A Preschool Program:
HIPPY

HIPPY (Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters) is designed for mothers of four- to five-year-olds. It has a two-year curriculum and materials to help the mothers teach specific skills to increase readiness for kindergarten. Local parent aides visit families twice a month to explain the program and review lessons. In other weeks, mothers, aides, and coordinators meet to discuss the lesson topics and parenting concerns. A longitudinal study through grade 10 found that HIPPY improved children's achievement and adjustment in school. It also improved mothers' self-esteem, involvement in children's education, and interest in their own further education (Fruchter, Galleta, & White 1992; Rioux & Berla 1993).

learning opportunities, to link social services with educational programs, and to train parents in leadership and child advocacy. Some organizations have a long history of activities; many have demonstrated their worth. All focus on critical needs. Communities can be a powerful influence on parents and children. There are a variety of ways that community groups can help increase family involvement in their children's learning.

Combatting alcohol, drugs and violence. Each year, thousands of our youth become involved in the use of alcohol and other drugs and engage in violent behavior. Twenty-eight percent of high school seniors reported that they had five or more drinks in a row in the previous two weeks. While drug use has been on the decline for several years, recent statistics indicate that the number of secondary school students who are using illicit drugs is increasing, while the number of students who believe that drug use poses a significant risk is decreasing. Data from the University of Michigan's Monitoring the Future study indicate that slightly more than one-quarter of high school seniors, almost one-fifth of 10th-graders, and almost one-tenth of 8th-graders reported some use of marijuana in the past year. After declining for several years, the use of other drugs, such as inhalants, LSD, and stimulants, is also on the rise.

However, some prevention programs have been successful, and communities can play an important part in these programs. The most promising prevention programs are those in which parents, students, schools, and communities join together to send a firm, clear message that violence and the use of alcohol and other drugs will not be tolerated (U.S. Department of Education 1990). Schools can create clear choices and opportunities for success, they can provide role models and mentors, and working with parents, they can develop the social skills youth need to cope in today's society in a nonviolent manner. They also can provide opportunities in after-school hours and develop programs to reduce

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the "risk factors" for engaging in violent behavior. Solving the drug and violence problem is a tremendously complex enterprise that requires the cooperation of the entire community.

Reinforcing successful child-raising skills. Programs for parents may offer classes, literacy training, career preparation, early childhood education, monitoring of children's health needs, and referrals for services. High-quality programs engage parents early, sometimes before the child's birth, and stress the critical early years of a child's development and the parent's primary role in nurturing that development. Communities can encourage these types of programs. The widely acclaimed 1960s Perry Preschool Project for three- and four-year-olds from low-income families found more school success among participating children and far lower future public service costs than for a similar unserved group (Berrueta-Clement et al. 1984). This project was one of the important forerunners of Head Start, which helps parents to be better primary educators and advocates for their children. A soon-to-be-released national evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy program, which is designed to help parents prepare their children for schooling through early childhood education, parenting education, and adult basic education, reports that the vocabularies of economically at-risk children increased significantly when their parents took a substantial amount of parenting education. Children whose parents did not receive much parenting education did not show gains (St. Pierre, Swartz, Gamse, Murray, Deck, & Nickel 1994).

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is a Missouri program for parents of children up to three years old. It features regular home visits by a parent educator who discusses child-rearing skills and child development, ongoing parenting workshops, and other exchanges. Missouri legislation requires each school district to have the program. Families who are least likely to use PAT are given special attention and are referred to community services. A study of 37 diverse Missouri districts found three-year-old children scoring above national norms on measures of language and school-related success. Parent-child communication also improved, and more than half the children with developmental delays overcame them by age three (Fruchter, Galleta, & White 1992; Pfannenstiel, Lambson, & Yarnell 1991).

A growing number of programs focus specifically on getting fathers more involved with their children. Several of these were highlighted at a July, 1994, conference on fathers led by Vice President Gore. One of these, the Philadelphia Children's Network, operates a Father Reengagement Initiative, which helps men engage in activities with their children and begin to provide emotional and financial support for their children.

For school-age children, the National Urban League directs Partners for Reform of Science and Math (PRISM), a comprehensive national initiative to get parents involved in local school reforms. A network of parents serve as advocates for ways in which families and communities in the state can be involved in children's education. Attractive materials for parents depict strategies for promoting reforms, using community institutions like museums and science centers, and strengthening home learning environments. Leader's guides and videos also

have been developed (National Urban League n.d.).

The MegaSkills Program created by Dorothy Rich (1988) is designed to help parents help their children develop broadly applicable skills and values like confidence, effort, and responsibility. Workshop leaders from schools, community organizations, and businesses train parents and other caregivers, who then carry out learning activities at home with their children. More than 4,200 parent workshop leaders from 45 states and more than 1,000 school districts have been trained. The MegaSkills Program has also been adopted or sponsored by 96 businesses for their employees and the community. Several studies show increases in the understanding of parents' role in education, time spent with children on schoolwork, and children's school performance (Fruchter, Galleta, & White 1992; Rioux & Berla 1993). A recent extension of the MegaSkills Program focuses on both the classroom and the family to ensure that children receive consistent, mutually reinforcing information about the importance of skills and attitudes to school success.

Black and white leadership must see the ... connection between national and personal values, between programs and policy, between community empowerment strategies and politics, and stop the piecemeal approach to helping children and families.

Professor James Comer,
family-school program developer,
Yale University

Family Service America, an association of more than 1,000 community-based service agencies, provides national training and dissemination for Families Together with Schools. This collaborative research-based prevention and early intervention program encourages families of children at risk of drug abuse or school failure to participate in weekly team-led meetings that promote "quality" parent-child time together (Family Service America n.d.).

Parents of children with disabilities have special concerns and often need a great deal of information about the disability of their child, about school services, therapy, local policies, funding sources, transportation, medical facilities, and much more (Ripley 1993). Several local communities have also created resource centers that are devoted primarily to families of children with disabilities. Such centers lend toys and books and provide parenting information and workshops on parents' and children's rights in special education legislation. Community-based organizations such as the ARC (formerly the Association for Retarded Citizens), United Cerebral Palsy, the National Easter Seal Society, and LDA (Learning Disabilities Association of America), also provide training and support to families in almost every community (Ferguson 1994).

Providing mentor programs. In mentor programs, interested persons—from college students to senior citizens—offer emotional support, guidance, and specific assistance to young people. Because of changes in families and communities, many youth have few opportunities for contacts with adults who can help them develop into responsible adults. A number of mentor programs sprang up in the 1980s to address this need. A study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, which has organized mentors for many years, noted the importance of detailed screening and supervision of mentors to assure high rates of interaction (Furano, Roaf, Styles, & Branch 1993). The HOSTS (Help One Student to Succeed) program of mentor/tutorial assistance in reading has proved successful and is used at more than 400 sites (Sopris West 1993).

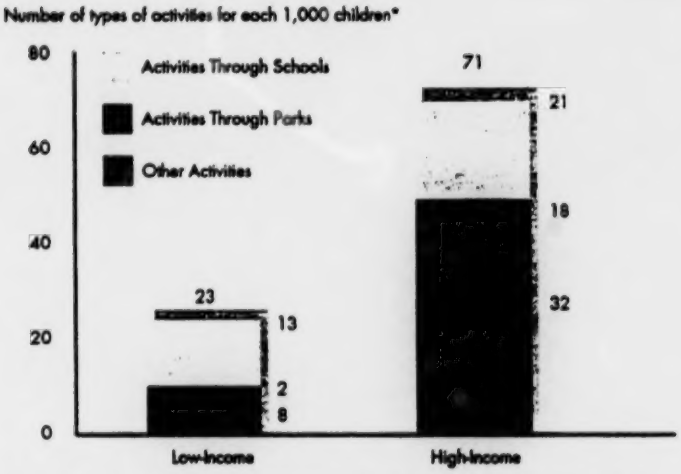
In 1971 the Teaching-Learning Communities (T-LC) Mentor Program in Ann Arbor, Michigan, was established using older volunteers to give potential dropouts the guidance and motivation they need to stay in school. The program proved so successful that today T-LC operates in 12 elementary, middle, and high schools in Ann Arbor. More than 200 mentors are working with students on a one-on-one basis from one to five times a week. The majority of the mentors are senior citizens, many of whom are recruited into the program by community organizations and by enthusiastic friends who are already mentors.

Enlisting community volunteers. During 1987-88, more than a million people volunteered in schools. Some 60 percent of schools reported having volunteers, most often in elementary schools, suburban areas, and low-minority locations (Michael 1990). The PTA, with more than 6 million members, and the Junior League, a national organization of women committed to community service, have provided school volunteers from their ranks for many years. About half the elementary school volunteers were involved with instructional support, whereas in secondary schools the volunteers most often provided other types of help. An earlier survey estimated that one-third of volunteers were parents, one-quarter older citizens, and about one-fifth each students and business employees. A number of studies have shown positive effects on student achievement and motivation through the use of volunteers as tutors, although little is known about the effects of volunteers in other roles (Michael 1990). Drawing more volunteers to schools in minority and low-income areas is a continuing challenge.

Youth Services in Memphis, Tennessee, is an outreach ministry of the Episcopal Church of West Tennessee that provides youth with the skills they need to earn a living and take charge of their lives. Bridge Builders is one program they operate that builds bridges of understanding, communication, and mutual respect among high school sophomores and juniors from different ethnic and racial groups. Student leaders from both public and private schools attend summer training conferences at Memphis State University and the University of the South at Sewanee, hold monthly seminars, and commit to work together on community projects over a two-year period.

Tapping the resource of retired and mature individuals. Our senior population represents an undertapped resource of volunteers. American society

Low-Income Neighborhoods Offer Few Types of Activities for Youth Aged 11-14



Sources: Chapin Hall Center for Children 1992. Based on case studies of inner-city and suburban Chicago neighborhoods.

today possesses not only the fastest-growing but the largest, best-educated, and most vigorous population of older adults in our history. Approximately 40 percent of Americans over the age of 60 are now involved in some kind of voluntary activity, if only for a few hours a week. Two programs, the Foster Grandparents Program and the Senior Community Service Employment Program, have components specifically aimed at helping at-risk or disabled youth to achieve at school. In 1992, 23,000 volunteers in the Foster Grandparents Program served 89,000 children by teaching literacy, caring for abused and neglected children, teaching parenting skills to pregnant teenagers, counseling juvenile delinquents, and helping children with disabilities. The Senior Community Service Employment Program, Title V of the Older Americans Act, is administered by 10 national organizations, one of which is the American Association of Retired Persons. Under Title V, some 65,000 older adults nationally volunteer in a number of community service areas, including those similar to the Foster Grandparents Program (Freedman 1994).

Offering summer learning programs. Summer learning programs, which expand the scope of learning and employ less-formal procedures, are particularly important for low-income children who, studies show, suffer serious academic losses over the summer, largely because low-income families and communities have limited academic resources (Heyns 1988, Entwisle & Alexander 1992). A number of successful summer programs with similar attributes have been identified. One in Oak Lawn, Illinois, works with 100 entering high school freshmen for six weeks each summer. In addition to helping students directly, outreach workers visit homes to build strong communication between families and schools. A full-time home-school coordinator also works throughout the year in this Chapter 1 secondary school program (U.S. Department of Education 1993b).

Linking social services. Because unmet health problems and welfare needs often limit children's ability to learn, there is growing interest in making sure that parents know about and have access to community services for children and their families. A recent review shows that successful coordination of services can result in the provision of convenient and comfortable facilities, increased focus on prevention, a sustained commitment from various specialized agencies, and more participation by families in the planning process (Chimerine, Panton, & Russo 1993).

A step-by-step guide for local development of a "profamily system" of education and health services, based on the experience of seasoned practitioners and researchers, describes several community efforts (Melaville & Blank 1993). The range of services available is an issue that the local communities and parents should decide. Some communities prefer locating social services in schools; some prefer links to facilities near schools; others prefer for schools to make referrals only (Kagan & Neville 1993).

The Walbridge Caring Communities program in St. Louis, based in an inner-city school and a nearby church, provides family crisis intervention, substance abuse counseling, after-school tutoring and recreational activities, and a range of other family services. The Children's Aid Society, a private, nonprofit organization, has teamed with a New York City middle school (I.S. 218) to provide extended-day and Saturday services all year at the school. Programs include academic support, reading and math tutoring for new immigrants in their native language, a health clinic including mental health consultations, a resource center for parents, and decision-making teams of administrators, teachers, and parents. An interim evaluation of the costs and benefits of the first year's operation showed positive results (Children's Aid Society n.d.). Another program, New Beginnings, in San Diego, co-locates service agencies at an elementary school to meet family needs collaboratively.

Neighborhood organizations need to understand the concerns of young people and their parents and to involve families in planning and directing activities for youth in inner-city areas. In a three-city study, McLaughlin (1994) noted that leaders of successful neighborhood groups were flexible, provided a wide range of personal services and personal development opportunities, and offered a sense of security despite violence in the neighborhood.

Project SPIRIT, run by the Congress of National Black Churches, focuses specifically on instilling strength, perseverance, imagination, responsibility, integrity, and talent in young, inner-city African American males. In place since 1978, this program features daily after-school programs conducted in church facilities by older volunteers. Activities include tutoring, role-playing activities to teach practical life skills, snacks, and prayer. Weekly education sessions for parents not only provide information on child development and effective parenting techniques but also help parents become strong advocates for their children both at school and in the community (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development 1994).

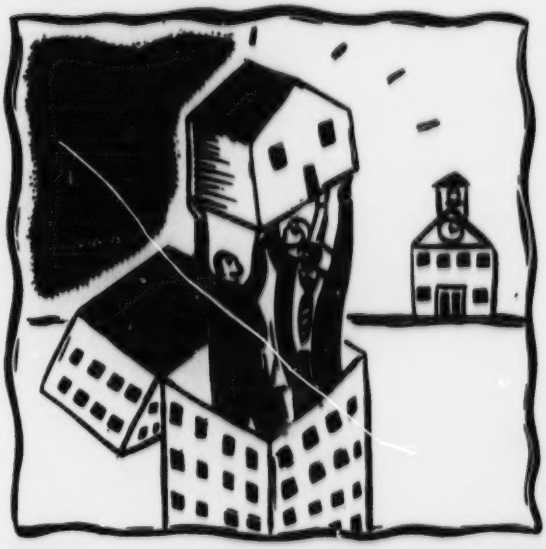
Encouraging parental leadership. Many education and advocacy organizations, such as the PTA, the National Coalition of Title 1/Chapter 1 Parents, the

National Urban League, and the Head Start Parent Association, train parents to be leaders and advocates for their children. The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund has developed a Parent Leadership Program. Targeted primarily on schools in southern California, this program helps Mexican American parents understand their children's school and the U. S. education system, learn how to help their children at home, become involved in school decision-making councils, and participate in parent-initiated school projects. In an advanced course, parents gain organizational skills for working with other parents. Since 1989, more than 600 parents have completed the program (Perez-Ortega 1994).

Thus various aspects of the community—school systems, local community groups, religious organizations, individuals, and national organizations working locally—can help strengthen children's safety and achievement and families' ability to help their children learn. Some organizations work directly with parents to build their skills and leadership. Others do what parents are unable to do: volunteer during school hours, tutor and mentor youth, or run summer learning programs. Some programs deal exclusively with education, while others address concerns about the safety and welfare of children—concerns that must be resolved before learning can take place. All provide important supports to families in difficult circumstances.

Other organizations can help connect families and schools as well. The work of exemplary businesses and states, as well as the role of the federal government, are described in the next sections.

"FAMILY-FRIENDLY" BUSINESSES



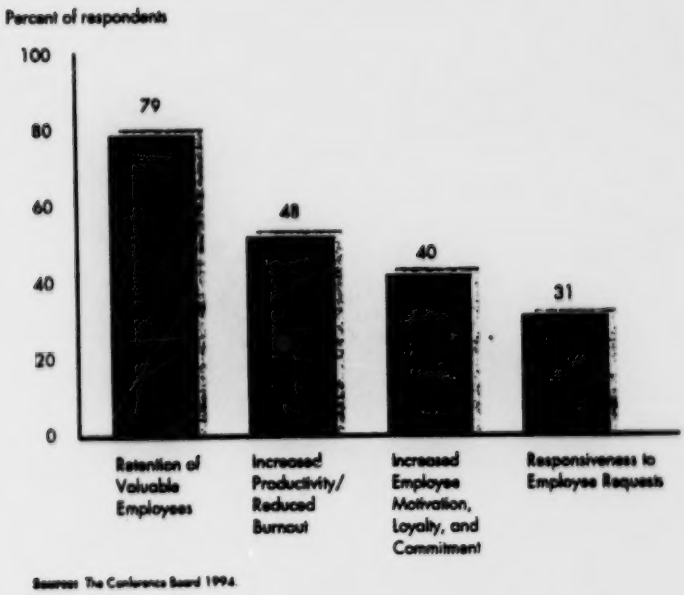
Many businesses also recognize the need for parents to be involved in education. Although a number of businesses have been investing in overall school reform, many are now realizing the importance of increasing family involvement. "Family-friendly" businesses have at least one of the following policies: allowing time for employees to get involved with schools; initiating, implementing, and funding specific programs that promote family involvement in education; and providing resources to employees on how to become more involved in their own children's education.

"Flextime" can give employees some flexibility in deciding when to begin and end their workday. Employers may require employees to be at work during core hours, for example, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., but allow them to come in late or leave early. Such policies allow employees to tailor their hours to fit a schedule better for their families. Flextime is an option for 29 percent of employees in the United States, including those at the Pillsbury Company, Lockheed Missiles and Space Corporation, and Corning Incorporated (Families and Work Institute 1994).

Under another type of flextime, sometimes called "lunchtime flex," employees work longer hours from start to finish but are able to take longer lunchtimes, allowing them to visit their children at a nearby day care center or school. Forty-seven percent of employees have access to lunchtime flex. IBM

"Family-friendly" businesses have at least one of the following policies: allowing time for employees to get involved with schools; initiating, implementing, and funding specific programs that promote family involvement in education; and providing resources to employees on how to become more involved in their own children's education.

Advantages to Investing in Job Sharing
For Employers



Source: The Conference Board 1994

and Bank of America are two examples of employers that offer a formal lunchtime flex policy.

Employers can also allow employees to work part time or to job-share. Many employees, including 19 percent of those with young children and 29 percent of women with young children, say they would happily trade a full-time income for a part-time one in order to spend more time with their children (Families and Work Institute 1994). In order for part-time work or job sharing to be viable options, employees who use them must receive prorated pay and benefits, and their contributions must continue to be taken seriously. DuPont and NationsBank both offer professional part-time work options, and the Jefferson County public school system in Kentucky currently has at least 10 job-sharing positions.

Some employers offer flexible policies specific to education by allowing parents to be late or absent on the first day of school or by allotting parents a specific number of hours or days off to participate in school activities. Some policies include not only parents but other employees as well, thus allowing grandparents, other family members, and citizens to help schools and foster children's learning.

Because work occupies much of the day, many employers use the job site as a forum for parental support and education. Approximately 26 percent of large employers offer seminars, often at lunchtime, on a range of parenting

issues, including parental involvement. Some employers offer national parental involvement programs, such as Parents as Teachers or HIPPY, through the workplace. Others, such as Merrill Lynch and HBO, offer libraries from which employees can borrow books or videos on parenting. Still other employers publish newsletters for parents, provide literacy training, or contract with family resource hotlines that employees can call for advice and information on education-related issues.

Employers can also work to improve child care options for their employees, either by providing child care through on- or near-site centers or by working to improve child care centers in the community at large. John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company offers on-site child care and school vacation programs for employees' children. Some businesses, such as Levi Strauss, help employees pay for child care through voucher programs or discounts. And 55 percent of large companies take advantage of federal tax law by offering Dependent Care Assistance Plans, which allow employees to set aside up to $5,000 of their pretax salaries for child care expenses (Families and Work Institute 1994).

Businesses can also help schools directly by forming partnerships with schools and by donating money, equipment, or special expertise. Often employees are given time off to volunteer. Employers can fund special projects—such as newsletters, voice mail systems, and centers for parents—aimed at improving parent-teacher relationships. Business leaders can further education reform by serving on task forces investigating new ways to improve parental involvement or by helping to pass legislation. A few employers have established schools on their grounds for employees' children. Businesses can be involved directly in educating children by participating in a school-to-work program. They can work closely with high school teachers to develop a program that provides work-based and school-based learning, and they can offer to have employees serve as mentors to teach students entry-level skills in an occupation.

STATES CONNECTING FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS

A number of states have developed family partnership programs that include small grants for new activities, parent-school coordinators, family resource rooms, and other innovations.

Many states have recently passed laws on different aspects of family involvement in education. Some relate to parental education or teacher training, while others require the inclusion of parents on school governing boards, parental participation in the development of local school policies, or parents' participation in the creation of policies on family involvement. Still others have adopted broader reforms such as partnerships with universities and businesses (White 1994). Some focus on the preschool years, as does the Missouri Parents as Teachers program, while others span the range of school grade levels and kinds of family involvement. A number of states have developed family partnership programs that include small grants for new activities, parent-school coordinators, family resource rooms, and other innovations (Epstein 1991b). Several examples show how states can create multifaceted programs.

South Carolina is known for its grass-roots approach to engaging parents, educators, and businesses in developing and implementing a comprehensive reform package that resulted in concrete student achievement gains between 1983 and 1990. Former Governor Richard Riley involved tens of thousands of citizens in education reform in a variety of ways: A poll provided advice on the educational concerns of the parents, general public, and teachers, and on the improvements in education they would support. Families, teachers, and other citizens and state and local leaders developed specific ideas at regional

evening forums through small group discussions. Each region of the state held an "education day" inviting significant state and local leaders to visit schools, participate in TV and radio programs, and speak about the need for school reform. A toll-free hotline staffed by volunteers invited citizens to call in with ideas for the emerging state school reform package. A speakers bureau provided some 500 speeches during a five-month period leading up to passage of the reform legislation. For several months an ad campaign encouraged citizens to participate in the effort to improve the schools. A panel of state leaders crafted the reform plan based on the latest studies suggesting promising practices and policies and on the recommendations that came from the forums, speakers bureau, hotline, and expert testimony. South Carolina has also established a way of connecting parents and schools at the birth of a child. The state developed "birth packets" of information for parents on how to work with their children in developmental and learning activities. The packet included a letter to the parents from the governor and school superintendent welcoming their child into the world of learning.

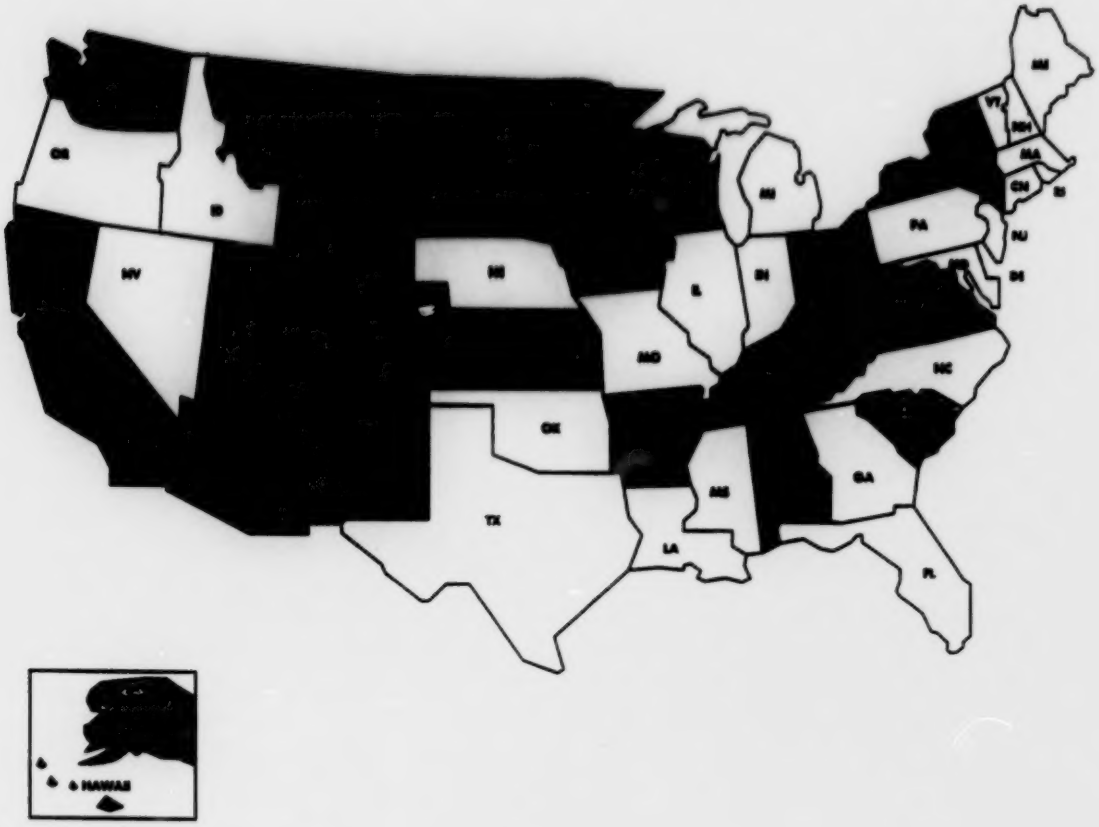
To increase the skills and knowledge of educators, the **California** State Department of Education helped school districts and staffs develop comprehensive parental involvement programs (Solomon 1991). In several rounds of seminars across the state, leading researchers and practitioners discussed outreach strategies, home learning activities, and supportive school and district policies and actions.

The State Office of Education and the PTA in **Utah** cosponsored training of parental volunteers, who then trained thousands of families across the state in a Family Education Plan. Parents learned how to improve the home learning environment and how to take a greater part in their children's education. Newspaper inserts and weekly public television programs kept a spotlight on the program (Utah Center for Families in Education n.d.). In addition, all schools in Utah develop with parents an individual education plan for each student.

Wisconsin has actively promoted parental involvement since 1988. It has recently trained 30 teams of educators, parents, and board members from districts across the state, and given them small grants to implement their parental involvement plans. A fast-food chain and foundations have funded posters, brochures, and awards for parents. A newsletter keeps teams in touch (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 1994).

In 1992, the governor of **Idaho** recognized the importance of supporting

Only Half the States Mandate
Parent Involvement Requirements for Teacher Certification



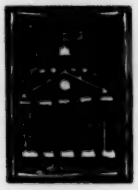
Source: Radcliffe et al. 1994.

family involvement on a statewide level when he signed an executive order allowing state employees to take one hour of paid administrative leave per week, or four hours per month, to volunteer in a school. The number of employees taking this option has grown over the past few years and has created strong working relationships between the state government and schools all across Idaho (Andrus 1994).

Family training and information centers also exist in each state to assist parents of children with disabilities. Although the services vary from state to state, parents typically receive training individually and in groups to understand their rights under federal and state law. This training helps them develop skills to participate effectively in planning an appropriate educational program for their children.

The number of states with recent legislative action, prominent activities, and sophisticated programs suggests a growing awareness of how states can promote connections between families and schools. However, two recent studies concluded that most states do not require teachers or administrators to engage in much study of family involvement or to develop many skills to promote it in the course of their training (Radcliffe, Malone, & Nathan 1994; Shartrand, Kreider, & Erickson-Warfield in press). Currently, only about half of the states have any teacher certification requirements regarding family involvement. Of those that do, most focus on the early childhood and elementary levels. Early childhood and elementary school teacher training programs often use more innovative ways of teaching family involvement, such as interactive work with parents, role playing, and case method teaching, rather than traditional lecture and reading teaching styles. The quality of teacher training in parental involvement is higher at earlier grades as well. Twenty six states also have specific coursework or competency requirements for certification in teaching special education (Radcliffe, Malone, & Nathan 1994). But many states, including New York, Utah, and Wisconsin, are currently making comprehensive changes in certification requirements in the area of parental involvement (Shartrand, Kreider, & Erickson-Warfield in press).

Although the cost of developing parental partnership efforts is hardly prohibitive, allocations for state activities have been meager. It has been estimated that for about $25 per student per year, a school could develop a viable parent-school program and hire a coordinator, and that $10 per pupil at the district level and $5 at the state level would establish a structure to improve school and family connections (Epstein 1991b).



MAKING FEDERAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMS SUPPORTIVE

Working with groups of parents and citizens, all agencies of the federal government can provide leadership to strengthen parental involvement through their policies and programs.

The federal government can also promote positive parent-school relationships. On July 11, 1994, President Clinton issued a directive requiring all federal agencies to "encourage and support the expansion of flexible family-friendly work arrangements, including job sharing; career part-time employment; alternative work schedules; telecommuting and satellite work locations".

We want to set a standard in the federal government that can spread throughout the American workplace, a standard that keeps families together instead of driving them apart.

Vice President Albert Gore

In 1993-94, President Clinton sent to Congress, and it passed, a series of very important pieces of education legislation that emphasize strengthening parent-school-community partnerships and promoting parent involvement in learning. The Goals 2000: Educate America Act includes the promotion of parent involvement as a critical aspect of successful schools. The largest federal

education program, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, after reauthorization, will increase support for activities that encourage involvement of parents in school activities and in their children's schoolwork.

Working with groups of parents and citizens, all agencies of the federal government can provide leadership to strengthen parental involvement through their policies and programs. The U.S. Department of Education especially can help to draw attention to this important issue. U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley, in his State of American Education speech in February 1994, emphasized the importance of family involvement. He followed that speech in September by launching a national Family Involvement Partnership. This paper provides the research base for the national partnership. Working with an informal coalition of groups dedicated to increasing family involvement and with civic, religious, and business leaders, this partnership can help to put family involvement high on the American agenda. The partnership will help families, schools, communities, and businesses to do more to increase family involvement in education by highlighting examples of successful family involvement initiatives and by providing technical assistance to communities.

The Goals 2000 legislation recognizes the need for family involvement with a new goal specifically focused on promoting increased parental involvement in schools. In addition, it provides for the creation of family information and resource centers. The Goals 2000 Act also requires that parents be represented on state and local panels designing school improvement plans and be part of grass roots outreach efforts to improve schools and student learning.

Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requires districts and states to seek parents' input in the planning, design, and implementation of local programs. There must be annual meetings, timely information on student progress, and staff accessible to parents. Funds may also be used for activities that encourage collaboration between families and the Title 1 project, engage families in school activities, and provide information to parents to help their children with schoolwork. Under the proposed reauthorization of ESEA, parents and educators would develop pledges—known as compacts—to work together and to support learning in school and at home. The form of the compact and follow-up would be determined locally. In addition to these compacts, the reauthorization specifies that Title I funds be used not only for parent training, but for training school staff to improve communications with families as well.

The Department of Education's role in school violence prevention is likely to be expanded following final congressional action on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The ESEA's Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program recognizes the problem of violence in schools. The reauthorization of the law will expand the scope of the current act to include school violence. The new program will address the problems of violence and drug use by authorizing a formula grant program, discretionary grants, evaluation, and the development and dissemination of materials.

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act also encourages families to become involved in the development of local programs. The act specifically lists parents along with employers, educators, and community leaders as key players in designing and implementing a school-to-work partnership. Parents can play a

Families, Schools, and Learning Compacts

Learning compacts are pledges that define the expectations and mutual responsibilities of schools and parents as partners in student success. Some school districts have adopted such agreements, and they are included in the current proposal to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. In Minneapolis, "covenants" are signed by the student, a parent or other adult, a teacher or other staff person, the superintendent, and a school board member, and community members. Each promises to work in specific ways to further the student's education. Such pledges are seen as a first step to further actions by each participant.

critical role in encouraging schools, postsecondary institutions, and businesses to become involved in these programs.

A number of other programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education also have family involvement components. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Department funds family-centered programs for infants and toddlers and coordinates services across disciplines and agencies as well as programs for preschool and school-age children with disabilities. For example, the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) provides free information on disabilities and disability-related issues. Some of the Department's bilingual education programs focus on family literacy and parental involvement. The Even Start program funds local projects linking early childhood education (up to seven years of age) with parenting education and basic adult education to help low-income families improve their lives.

The Department of Education also provides assistance to schools to help them be more family friendly. Technical assistance centers under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provide an array of services, including information and assistance to school systems on parental involvement issues. The Department plays an informational role by sharing successful examples of programs that can help schools, districts, and states find exemplary models from around the country, and funds research on new ideas and practices to improve parental involvement. The Department also helps families to pay for higher education through grants and low-interest loans, or for technical education through the new School-to-Work law.

Finally, the Department of Education recognizes the need to make itself a family-friendly workplace. In this effort, the Department holds lunchtime seminars on parenting and working with schools, stages an annual Parenting Fair, and allows its own employees to have flexible schedules to spend more time at home when their children are not in school, or to go to their children's schools for

events. All employees are invited to volunteer at local schools, and the Department matches the leave time that they use to volunteer, for up to four hours per pay period.

While the U.S. Department of Education will be a key partner in the national initiative to support family involvement, all federal agencies can help. In September 1994, the U.S. Department of Agriculture released a brochure called "A Parent's Guide to Healthy Meals," which encourages parents to get involved in their children's school meals programs. In the Department of Justice, the National Institute of Justice implements evaluations of school-based violence prevention strategies. The Department of Justice is also teaming up with the Department of Education to support the National School Safety Center (NSSC). NSSC develops materials and training curricula and provides technical assistance to state and local educational agencies on issues related to safety, discipline, violence, and drug-use prevention.

The Department of Health and Human Services has myriad programs that support families and children in learning. In particular, the Administration on Children, Youth and Families awarded 32 three-year grants to community partnerships in order to demonstrate a variety of successful approaches to supporting children and families as they move from the Head Start program through kindergarten and the first three grades of public school. Family involvement is a critical aspect of this enterprise: individual transition plans are developed for each child and family between Head Start and kindergarten, and each grade through third grade; individual family support plans are also developed; supportive service teams of family service coordinators make periodic home visits with teachers; parents undertake the local governance of the project with a voting parent membership of at least 51 percent; and a family outreach program is included that draws up a plan for involving families in the management of the local programs.

The U.S. Department of Defense, through each branch of the service, provides families with a number of supports that are recognized through the official organizational structure. One Army community family involvement project, administered locally by the Family Support Division at Ft. Hood, Texas, is a partnership with the Killeen Independent School District. Together, they have piloted a parent involvement program that makes attending parent-teacher conferences twice every six weeks a soldier's duty. In the commanding general's directive, he noted, "Parental involvement does make a difference in a child's education and has lasting effects on his or her future." Parents learn about their child's progress, share concerns with their child's teacher, and hear comments about their child during these 20-30 minute conferences. Preliminary data indicate great gains in achievement since the program was implemented. In school year 1994-95, the program expanded to more than 60 Adopt-a-Schools partnering with FT. HOOD 2000.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is working to establish safe study areas for students and families in housing projects. One example of this effort began in 1986 when the Omaha, Nebraska Housing Authority and the Omaha Public Schools began a program that provides study

halls, computers, mentors, and academic and recreational volunteers for the large number of young people in housing projects at risk for dropping out of school. Other links between the housing projects and the schools have been established. After a child is absent for two days, the school calls the parent and the housing authority staff. Families can be evicted from the project if their children do not attend school. Home visits are arranged to identify the root of the problem. Parent-teacher conferences are often held at the housing project. The greater Omaha community has arranged to reward project children with perfect school attendance and provide scholarships for graduating seniors. The U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services are also working with HUD to fund study halls and coordinate services in housing projects.

All areas of the federal government can help reduce barriers that prevent greater family involvement in children's learning, and the federal government can draw attention to this important issue.

CONCLUSION

In this fast-paced time, with the pressures of international economic competition, and an increased focus on technology, parents, educators, businesses, local communities, states, and national governments are all struggling to encourage improvement in education to help our children prosper.

One means of helping us achieve this goal—family involvement in education—has existed for generations. Family involvement complements exciting developments underway in our schools today to improve student learning. New reform efforts, such as the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, encourage and promote family involvement in school improvement efforts.

Families need to be involved in improving learning in the home and in every school across this nation if our children are to become more competent scholars and more successful and productive citizens. Families can reinforce learning in their homes by being involved in their children's schools, by encouraging their children to take challenging courses, and by expanding their own parenting and literacy skills.

As this review of research and promising practices on connecting families and schools demonstrates, the task is formidable, yet clearly attainable.

It is formidable because families in today's modern society face increased demands on their time, growing competition for children's attention, and economic burdens that force more parents to work outside the home, and severe-

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ly limit the time they can spend with their children. These challenges are complicated by the lack of communication between schools and families and by the fact that often schools' practices fail to meet the needs of many students' families.

At the same time, however, there are signs that connections between schools and families can be made stronger. Whatever their struggles, parents from all walks of life want their children to succeed and want to work with schools to achieve that success. We know how parents can help educate their children for success in school and in the future. Many families are already doing this, and with encouragement and help, many more can do the same.

Schools can and do play a key role in strengthening these connections. Parents turn to schools for guidance. When teachers and administrators are commited to drawing in parents, student achievement improves. As this paper has shown, a number of promising initiatives have demonstrated innovative ways to bring more families into the education process. Through these efforts and others like them, schools stand to gain even greater support of parents and see more student progress.

The complexity of raising and educating children today requires support from all parts of the community. Programs sponsored by community groups and businesses, religious institutions, community-service organizations, and human service agencies are important in strengthening links between families and schools. National voluntary organizations must continue to lend their support. And cities, states, and the federal government need to expand their commitment to these efforts.

For the good of our next generation, all of us must work together to build on these existing promising efforts. We must create sound approaches where needed, and extend them to communities across the nation.

There are no quick fixes. Any effort to give parents more opportunities to help their children learn will require a shift in public attitudes regarding the importance of learning, a willingness of educators to fundamentally rethink the role of parents and school-family relationships, and the cooperation of the entire community. This paper seeks to stimulate this effort by beginning a national dialogue with parent, education, religious, business and community organizations on how we can work together to strengthen families and schools to help our young people develop the skills and character to be productive citizens and good and responsible neighbors. If we truly want to see our schools improve, our students accomplish more, and our nation become more creative, productive, and prosperous, we can do no less.

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Priscilla S. Taylor, *EEI*

U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE SECRETARY

Remarks Prepared For[1]
Richard W. Riley
U.S. Secretary of Education

National Press Club
Washington, D.C.
Wednesday, September 7, 1994
Embargoed: 1:00 P.M.

STRONG FAMILIES, STRONG SCHOOLS

Today I am releasing a report which I have sent to the President entitled, "Strong Families, Strong Schools." This document gives new recognition to the power, the promise and the potential of the American family in our continuing efforts to improve American education. This is a timely report that follows in the footsteps of another recent report by Child Trends on the decline of parental involvement in schools as young people enter their teens.

In the last eleven years, ever since the National Commission on Excellence in Education released its report, "A Nation at Risk," an enormous amount of effort has been made to instill a new spirit of excellence in American education. This effort has taken many forms -- increasing graduation requirements, improving teacher competency and salaries, and updating curricula.

This is all to the good. As a nation, we have taken a strong step forward in teaching math and science. The number of young people taking the recommended core academic curriculum is up 30 percent. And, we have a blueprint for excellence in education in the Goals 2000 Act which was signed by the President last March. But it is my very strong belief that more sustained attention needs to be paid to that most vital of links -- the promise and potential of parents and other family members as the most important teachers of their children.

The American family is the rock on which a solid education can and must be built. I have seen examples all over this Nation where two-parent families, single parents, step-parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles are providing strong family support for their children to learn.

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[1]The Secretary may depart from his prepared remarks.

400 MARYLAND AVE., S.W. WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202-0100

PS 022742

The research report I am releasing today tells us, in no uncertain terms, that the essential building block for learning is how the American family uses its strength and power to support and encourage young people to meet the high expectations now being demanded of them in the classroom.

This report, then, is both a call to arms against ignorance and low expectations -- a challenge to adult America to reconnect with our children's education -- and a summary of concrete examples to inspire parents to be part of their children's education in new and important ways.

This is why I am announcing the formation of a broad-based partnership led by the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE) to encourage and support American families as they seek to prepare their children for the Information Age that is now upon us. This common effort -- with each partner contributing in its own best way -- includes such organizations as the National PTA, the National Alliance of Business, the U.S. Catholic Conference, and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

Over the last six months, I and/or members of my staff have met with 125 different parent, religious, education, community-based and business groups on this important issue. While each group has its own distinctive strength and purpose, we are all committed to going in the same direction. There is a deep desire for partnership -- to coalesce around this vital issue and support families.

America needs to put its house in order -- to lower the deficit -- to stop the violence and despair of drugs -- to make sure our children go to school safely every day -- to assure Americans who play by the rules that there <u>are</u> rules and moral standards that we live by as a Nation.

To my mind, there is no more important place to begin putting our house in order than by recognizing that our children's expectations about the future are rooted in the day-to-day family activities that help children learn and develop good character. America needs to give up its get-it-now, live-for-today mentality and start looking down the road to make sure that we give all of our children the America they deserve.

Thirty years of research tells us that the starting point of American education is parent expectations and parental involvement with their children's education. This consistent finding applies to every family regardless of the parents' station in life, their income or their educational background. As this report indicates, three factors over which parents exercise authority -- daily attendance in school, reading material and literature in the home, and the amount of television a young person watches -- are some of the strongest indicators we have that home life makes a difference when it comes to learning.

Other important research needs to be highlighted. A child who grows up reading for

fun is a child who is on the road to success when it comes to learning. We know, for example, that children's success in school can be linked to reading to children and listening to them read.

Many years ago, the great American patriot Frederick Douglass was struck by the powerful recognition that to "teach a slave to read" was the "pathway from slavery to freedom." Listen to Douglass' powerful testimony: "I set out with high hope and fixed purpose, at whatever cost of trouble, to learn how to read."

My friends, we need that same type of zeal in the here and now to help families have the same high hope and fixed purpose. All the data we have tells us that children can learn to read to high standards if we work with families.

For America to read together, then something has to give. I, for one, want to suggest that the teenager who is perpetually glued to the tube is well on the way to having a very dull mind and a very dull -- and perhaps risky -- future. Television is part of our culture and anyone who has children knows its power to mesmerize, captivate, excite .... and yes, teach as well. But I am concerned when report after report tells us that reading scores decline at all grade levels tested, when young people go into the "red zone" of danger and watch more than six hours of television on a weekday.

I believe that many parents feel overwhelmed by the all of the outside influences shaping the lives of their children. They feel that our popular culture, with its current emphasis on making fame a virtue and often for the strangest of reasons, undermines the values they want their children to have. They see so many of our young people growing up wild -- without any abiding sense of citizenship or sense that they have a stake in this country's future.

We need to get our priorities straight. Without a good education, a young person can grow up to be a tragic and unhappy figure. Ten years from now, imagine the problems and the inequity, indeed the crisis, as the six million additional children now flooding into our education system find themselves without the skills and knowledge they need to get ahead.

We've got to do better. As this report notes, there are several significant obstacles that interfere with parents in their efforts to improve their children's learning: the pressure of time, the unsettling disconnection between educators and families; the uncertainty that family members feel about how they can contribute; the inflexibility of the work schedule; the sheer drag of poverty; and language barriers. Let me speak directly to several of these concerns.

First of all -- time. I am known for telling parents and educators that the most important single change we need for American education is to find new ways to help

parents slow down their lives. Many parents and other family members are stretched to the limit -- juggling jobs, putting food on the table, getting their children to safe after-school programs -- doing all they can to keep body and soul together.

But I believe that we are missing something far deeper in all this rushing around. We are letting our children grow up, at times, almost alone -- and disconnected. The education of American children -- their moral development, their sense of citizenship, and academic growth -- is done in fits and starts. This is not how families want to raise their children.

The effort that so many parents make to guide their children's lives repeatedly comes up against the rush of modern living. The mismatch in how major American institutions -- from schools to businesses -- carve out time in the day-to-day life of the American family is -- to my mind -- a serious impediment to how our young people are growing up. We ask families to twist and turn -- to go through every possible contortion to fit into the structure and time needs of schools or businesses or other institutions -- instead of the other way around. It is my very strong belief that we really must rethink what we are doing and how we use our time.

The best business leaders recognize that the early investment families make on behalf of their children leads to the promise of a skilled and educated workforce in the future. This is why the business leadership of America has been in the forefront of improving education for many years now. Some of these businesses are already developing new ways that America's "time" can be used to help families and the learning process.

We must see the value in job-sharing, flextime, and release time for families -- to give attention to the children. Schools at the plant site, day care in the office, parents working at home without stigma or financial loss -- whatever it takes -- we need to use all of our ingenuity to find new ways to connect families to their children in these hectic times.

I also urge educators to give special attention to the recent report of the National Commission on Time and Learning called "Prisoners of Time," which speaks directly to how "time" is being taken away from academics during the American school day. I will be the first to tell you that we will not be able to be first in anything -- math or science or any other subject for that matter -- if only 41 percent of the school day is given over to the core academic subjects.

Finally, I want to encourage every American family to stop and take stock, to take a "time inventory" of how the family is using its time --if they haven't already done so -- as we begin the new school year. This may be one way every family can find that extra time for learning. I want to suggest seven good practices that may be helpful to parents and family members.

First, take a time inventory, as I said, to find the extra time you need so the family can learn together. Commit yourself to learning something with your children. I think you will be rewarded and find happiness and joy in the shared effort.

Second, commit yourself to high standards and set high expectations for your children -- challenge them in every possible way to reach for their full potential.

Third, limit television viewing on a school night to a maximum of two hours even if that means that the remote control may have to disappear on occasion.

Fourth, read together. It is the starting point of all learning.

Fifth, make sure your children take the tough courses at school and schedule daily time to check homework.

Sixth, make sure your child goes to school every day and support community efforts to keep children safe and off the street late at night.

And seventh, set a good example and talk directly to your children, especially your teenagers, about the dangers of drugs and alcohol and the values you want your children to have. Such personal talks, however uncomfortable they make you feel, may save their lives.

This is homework in the true sense of the word. It is also preparation for life.

I want families all across America to know that we are all with you in this effort. The whole country is on your side. The President, Vice President and I will do all we can to promote these seven basic steps. You are not alone in your efforts to raise your children to follow the Golden Rule, to be good citizens and to learn the importance of what it means to be a proud American.

Now, I want to turn my attention to the unsettling reality that there is a disconnection between educators and parents that needs our attention. As I said in my "State of American Education" speech last February, too often parents and educators talk past one another. Many parents feel that their right to be involved in school policy -- to be full participants in the learning process -- is ignored, frustrated and sometimes even denied. They do not feel valued, and too often they find education jargon to be a putdown.

Kathryn Whitfill, the President of the National PTA, told a group of educators who were meeting at my office several weeks ago about how put off she felt walking into a school recently to be greeted by a sign that read, "Notice: Visitors Report to the Front Office." It was, to her mind, a cold, sterile greeting to any parent visiting the school,

with all the warmth of an unexpected legal notice.

This sign, as she related to a room full of nodding heads, was one small but vivid symbol that parents were less than welcome. There was nothing inviting ... nothing that suggested that parents were, in fact, the true owners of the school.

But I also know that there are countless schools and educators who have reached out to families and have been rewarded with higher test scores, active PTA's, volunteers, tutors, mentors, strong parent/community/school partnerships and "Security Dads" walking the halls.

James Comer, who has done so much to set the agenda for good parental involvement -- Dorothy Rich of Megaskills -- Ernie Cortez, a MacArthur Fellow, who is making parent power work in Texas -- and Henry Levin, the leader of the Accelerated Schools initiative -- are just a few of the many educators who have seen the potential and promise of family involvement in education. All across this country, teachers are hungry for parents to connect up with them when it comes to educating their children.

This is why I urge educators everywhere to change those signs on the school door that give parents the cold shoulder. Listen with an open ear. Reach out to parents as partners. Be creative in using the new technology -- from voice mail, to homework hotlines, to CD-ROM programs that are educational and now on the market -- and even the old telephone -- to get parents more involved in the learning process.

Parents -- including those who have strong religious values -- must be at the table when it comes to public education. But they must also be willing to build bridges and not see public education as the enemy. I assure you that nothing will be gained by tearing down public education and making the public school classroom the Bosnia of America's competing factions. When a community is divided, the children always suffer. Good common sense should tell us that now is the time for quiet voices to be heard in the search for common ground.

It is my hope that families, religious and civic groups and schools can come together to create a moral climate that sustains a culture of learning. A culture of learning rooted in the great common tradition of basic American values of democracy, honesty, self-reliance, hard work, and respect for the civic responsibilities of all Americans to participate in our democracy.

We must save this generation of children -- we must not lose them. So I shall spend much of my efforts in the coming year working with everyone to promote this family involvement partnership for learning. I ask all Americans to please tune in -- to recognize that anything we do to connect with our children -- to give them a sense that their lives and their learning matter to us -- is good for our children and good for our

country.

Together, we can start a fire of changing attitudes -- from "getting by" to "getting on with it" -- to once again giving first attention to the future of our children. It is our duty as parents, relatives, guardians and caring adults to get involved in our children's education. It is our patriotic duty as Americans who believe in this nation's future to make sure our children are shown a preference in our decisions.

This is the right way to go for America.

Thank you.

EXAMPLES OF
FAMILY INVOLVEMENT PARTNERSHIPS
ACROSS AMERICA

The projects profiled in this listing are illustrative of different kinds of family involvement partnerships across the country. They are intended to suggest the many promising ways families, schools, businesses, and communities can work together to improve student learning and school success.

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Alabama

Junior League and Lincoln Middle School: Parents in Touch

The Junior League has "adopted" Lincoln Middle School as the site for its "Parents in Touch" program. The League initiated the program with a dinner for parents. League members picked up 250 parents at home and brought them to the school for the dinner. Parents suggested projects and signed up for a variety of tasks, and made plans for the year. Monthly Saturday field trips for students, siblings, and parents are organized by League volunteers. League members order busses and plan the trips which include a cultural event and lunch.

Contact:

Barbara McDonald, Principal
Lincoln Middle School
901 Ninth Avenue, N.
Birmingham, AL 35204
205/581-5145

Wenonah Elementary School: Wenonah Elementary's Active Volunteers (WEAV)

Coordinated by a full-time paraprofessional, the parent involvement program includes seminars, home visits, and take-home computers. Wenonah Elementary's Active Volunteers (WEAV), assigns regular responsibilities to its participants, including substitute teaching, thus enabling teachers to visit other schools to observe education programs that have since been incorporated into the Wenonah curriculum. WEAV volunteers from the community supplement the efforts of the PTA in a variety of areas of school life, linking together family, community and school.

Contact:.

Herman Williams, Principal
Wenonah Elementary School
3008 Wilson road, SW
Birmingham, AL 35221
205/929-8180

Alaska

Anchorage School District: Family Math, Family Science, Family Geography

In the last school year, Anchorage has conducted 75 sessions of Family Math, Family Science, and Family Geography which is a new set of parent-child workshops created by the Anchorage School district. MegaSkills training and other workshops for parents are offered through the district to help children succeed in school. After-school activities are offered throughout the district, bringing volunteer community members into the schools. A newly-released handbook for volunteer coordinators offers guidance to leaders who coordinate these and other parent-student activities.

Contact:

Jill Waters, Director of Community Education
907/269-2450

Arizona

Nogales Unified School District: Chapter 1 Parent Liaisons

Long-time well-respected members of the community serve as liaisons, focussing on Chapter 1 students and their families. Liaisons serve 5 elementary, 2 middle, 1 high and 1 alternative schools. Through extensive phone calls and home visits, the liaisons have brought the large (96%) Hispanic community into direct contact with the schools. At "Super Sunday" programs, held in English and Spanish, the liaisons encourage parents and students to work together on cooperative projects.

Contact:

Dr. Raul Bejarano, Superintendent Nogales Unified School District
310 West Plum St.
Nogales, AR 85621
602/287-4977

Arkansas

Arkansas: Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)

HIPPY is a home-based school-readiness program for at-risk children 4-5 years old and their parents. The program provides parents with a two-year curriculum lesson plan. and materials to help them teach school readiness skills to their children. Arkansas is deeply committed to the HIPPY program, with 22 sites serving about 2,400 families. The core HIPPY program consists of home visits every other week in which a paraprofessional works with parents on sequenced activity units to perform with their children on a daily basis. On alternate weeks, group meetings are held at the local elementary school for discussions of lesson topics and parenting issues. HIPPY is designed to increase the parents' self-esteem and to improve their children's cognitive abilities.

Contact:

Michelle French, Arkansas HIPPY Director
1120 Marshall Rm. 412
Little Rock, AR 72202
501/320-3671

California

Homework Hotline

Homework Hotline is now in its 8th year of service, providing free homework help to students through a television program that airs year-round. The Emmy Award-winning Hotline is a joint project of the Los Angeles Unified School District and the United Teachers of Los Angeles. About 400 calls come in during each 4 day period. The first two segments deal with math and the second two segments deal with English. Twelve on- camera and off-camera teachers plan and tape the live segments of each broadcast. Parents are encouraged through the media and schools to have their children utilize this community resource for homework assistance.

Contact:

Hector Viera, Production Coordinator
Homework Hotline, KLCS-TV/Channel 58
Los Angeles Unified School District
1061 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
213/625-6958

Colorado

Poudre School District: Even Start

The program primarily serves residents of two mobile home parks. These sites were selected based upon the high percentage of dropouts residing in them. Of the 450 families living in the two parks, nearly 25 percent participate in Even Start programs that include tutoring, family enrichment and literacy programs. Empowerment is one of the special concerns at this Even Start site, as many parents feel uncomfortable about communicating with the schools their children attend. Staff training thus emphasizes the importance of patience in working with families, and collaboration to solve family problems.

Contact:

Carol Miller, Co-Director
Even Start
Poudre School District R-1
2407 La Porte
Fort Collins, CO 80521
303/490-3653

Marilyn Thayer, Co-Director
303/484-2580

Manual High School: We Can!-Parent Involvement Program

Primary among the goals of We Can! Parent Involvement Program are improving student achievement, especially for those who are performing below grade level and establishing networks and forming alliances among the 9th grade parents. As part of the program, parents spend a day in school and attend parenting workshops. As an incentive, the principal writes to the parents' employers requesting released time for parent to be on site at the school. During the past five years only one employer has been unwilling to grant the school's request for released time. Teachers give 9th graders extra credit for encouraging their parents to attend specified events.

Contact:

Linda Bates Transou, Principal
Manual High School
1700 E. Twenty-Eighth Avenue
Denver, CO 80205
303/391-6300

Connecticut

Lincoln-Bassett Community School: The School Development Program (SDP also known as The Comer Process)

Lincoln-Bassett is one of a growing number of schools nationwide that has adopted what is popularly known as The Comer Process, named for its founder, Dr. James P. Comer of Yale University. Emphasis is place upon improving the climate of schools that primarily serve disadvantaged children to make the school more responsive to the needs of families and students. School-based decision-making and revitalizing the bonds among school, family and community to help children learn are the key objectives. The Comer Process has now been expanded to include all elementary schools within the district.

Contact:

V.M. Roberts, Principal
Lincoln Bassett Community School
New Haven, CT
203/787-8839

General Electric: Partnering with Parents for Student Success

Funded by the G.E. Foundation, this program operates in partnership with individual schools to increase student learning in math, reading, and science, to improve student attendance and to decrease the number of student disciplinary referrals. Other goals of the program aim to improve parent involvement with their children's education and to encourage parents to enroll in adult education programs. Parents learn how to incorporate supplementary educational activities within the home.

Contact:

Phyllis McGrath
Precollege Program Manager
General electric Foundation
3135 Easton Turnpike
Fairfield, CT 06431
203/373-3216
FAX: 203/237-3029

Delaware

Columbia Gas

The public utility offers employees up to four hours of "released time" per month for taking part in an "approved educational activity" such as tutoring, counselling or serving on a school board or advisory committees. Employee parents are allowed two hours of released time per semester for teacher conferences or classroom visits.

Contact:

W.H. Chaddock, Senior Vice-President
The Columbia Gas System, Inc.
20 Montchanin Road
POB 4020
Wilmington, DE 19807-0020
302/ 429-5561
FAX: 302/ 429-5596

District of Columbia

MegaSkills Workshop Program from the Home and School Institute

The MegaSkills workshop program teaches and trains parents and other care givers to help their children at home become ready for learning. The "MegaSkills" are ten skills and attitudes that people need to learn to achieve success throughout their lives, such as motivation, common-sense and problem-solving. The workshops are conducted by trained volunteers through grants for training and materials. More than 4,200 parent workshop leaders from 45 states and over 1,000 school districts have been trained nationwide.

Contact:

Dorothy Rich, President
Home and School Institute, Inc.
1201 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 202/466-3633

James F. Oyster Bilingual Elementary School: The Oyster School Community Council

The Oyster School Community Council consists of a core team of about 25 parents who manage several school-based committees. For example, the Science Committee, led by four parents employed in the field professionally, worked with teachers to develop lessons featuring classroom presentations. The Cultural Diversity Committee held a workshop for other parents on prejudice awareness. Several committees have provided parent training in areas such as parent involvement in early childhood education.

Contact:

Pacquita B. Holland, Principal
James F. Oyster Bilingual Elementary School
29th and Calvert Streets, NW
Washington, DC 20008
202/ 673-7277

Florida

Full Service School Program

A Full Service School Program has been created by the Florida State University in partnership with five low-income elementary and secondary schools in Leon County (Tallahassee). The Program links the needs of families with resources in local agencies such as health care, emergency food, housing, and children's divorce support groups. It includes client advocacy, follow up, case management, and on-site family crisis and adolescent intervention counselling. The program operates under a grant from the state of Florida.

Contact:

Dot Inman-Crews, Administrator
904/ 644-6118

Feinberg-Fisher Elementary School: Rainmakers Program

RAIN--the Referral and Information Network-- is a school-based, grassroots initiative aimed at parent involvement in the school and community. With about 1,000 student enrolled, this school serves Spanish speaking, low-income families. The goals of the program include: increased coordination and integration of education, health and social services to families to enhance learning by children and to disseminate the results of the service integration projects to other schools and districts. One hundred trained parent volunteers aided by students are the backbone of the program. Funding for this program is provided by local, State, and private sources.

Contact:

Nidia Sica, Project Coordinator
RAINMAKERS
Fienberg-Fischer Elementary School
1420 Washington Avenue
Miami Beach, FL 33139
305/673-9727

Georgia

Inman Middle School: Transparent School/ Class Notes Homework Hotline

Located in Atlanta, with an enrollment of 750 students, the Inman Middle School is one of several institutions nationally to use the Transparent School Model, an interactive electronic mailbox service accessed via the telephone. Teachers are able to leave daily messages for parents to call in and hear one to three minute messages about that day in school and that night's homework. Parents may also access messages from the principal, PTA and other school professionals.

Class Notes Homework Hotline, a program for which Inman was recognized at the White House, remains an integral channel for the school. Class Notes provides parents with the ability to help students with homework assignments and to keep track of programs and events at school by accessing electronic mailboxes available through the Transparent school program.

Contact:

Dr. Barbara Naylor, Principal
774 Virginia Avenue, Northeast
Atlanta, GA 30306
404/853-4017

Hawaii

Aikahi Elementary School: The Early Provision for School Success Program

Aikahi Elementary School relies on strong community support and parental involvement to create an atmosphere that nurtures student's academic and social development and underscores the importance of avoiding violence. The Early Provision for School Success Program uses workshops to teach parents skills for becoming involved in their children's learning. The program encourages parents and their children to work together on various projects such as dancing, food preparation, and reading. Parents also give presentations on Career Day, serve as coaches for the Speech Festival and officials for the school's Fitness Meets.

Contact:

Robert Tokumaru, Principal
281 Ilihau Street
Kailua, HI 96734
808/254-3805

Illinois

The Center for Successful Child Development (CSCD)

The CSCD, also known as the Beethoven Project, serves mothers who reside in six buildings of a Chicago public housing project in a low-income, high-crime neighborhood. Mothers are identified early in their pregnancy and receive prenatal care, follow-up well-baby care, and postnatal services at the project's on -site health center. Child care enables the women to pursue individual plans for self-sufficiency. Formal and informal classes offer instruction on child development and parenting. Relevant social and community issues are also discussed, such as the effects of domestic violence on children. The Center also offers full day, full-year Head Start programs. Each family is assigned a Parent/Child Advocate who makes frequent home visits so that families have access to public assistance and social services. Additional personal support and opportunities to socialized are offered through the Family Enrichment Center.

Contact:

Jeff Hackett
The Ounce of Prevention Fund
188 West Randolph
Suite 2200
Chicago, IL 60601
312/ 853-6080; FAX 312/853-3337

Chicago Commons Association

Chicago Commons is a 100 year old social service agency committed to helping Chicago's socially and economically disadvantaged families overcome the barriers of poverty and become self-sufficient. Through a program that improves parents' literacy and job skills, the Chicago Commons Association creates a congenial home and learning environment for elementary school children on the city's West Side. An Employment Training Center (ETC) recruits parents over the age of 21 with children in one of the 13 targeted elementary schools in high poverty neighborhoods.. The program offers an individualized curriculum allowing parents to work at their own pace to address their personal needs. A case manager works with each parent to develop a personalized Employment Plan and a Family Development Plan.

Contact:

Jody Raphael or Jenny Wittner
Chicago Commons ETC
1633 North Hamlin
Chicago, IL 60647
312/342-5510

Maryland

"At Report Card Time: STOP, LOOK AND LISTEN"

The precipitating factor in 20 percent of child abuse reports is a negative note from school or a "bad" report card. The Baltimore City Commission for Children and Youth works with the Mayor's Office for Children and Youth to sensitize school leaders to the "report card syndrome." The program makes sure that each Baltimore City Public School student receives an attractive card with each report card. The card's message to parents is to "Stop what you are doing, look at your child's report card, and listen to what your child has to say." The card identifies positive parenting techniques and telephone numbers offering homework/tutoring help and counselling services. A media campaign compliments the distribution of these special cards at report card time. The program now reaches 110,000 Baltimore homes each marking periods and phone calls at report card time to agencies listed in the card are up. This year, as a result of a poor school report, there were two known cases of child abuse, compared with 60 cases the previous year.

Contact:

Sara Mandell, Special Assistant
Mayor's Office for Children and Youth
10 South Street, Suite 100
Baltimore, MD 21202
301/396-3362

Calverton and West Baltimore Middle Schools: Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS)

Launched in 1990, TIPS is intended to continue as an ongoing program within schools. It is based upon a core of research that links student gains and parent involvement with homework. An interactive homework process was developed to keep families involved in their children's education. Thus homework has become a three-way partnership, involving students, families and teachers. Frequent communications with parents in the form of written materials such as step -by-step instructions, and requests for comments are among the ways teachers and families stay in touch. Outcomes and evaluation target academic improvement and enhanced cooperation among parents, teachers, and schools. Certificates are awarded to students and parents once a certain number of TIPS activities are completed.

Contact:

Vivian Jackson
Fund for Educational Excellence
605 N. Eutaw Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
410/685-8300

Massachusetts

John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company

John Hancock considers itself a family-friendly business. A variety of activities and services for families of employees are provided. Flextime arrangements are common, enabling new mothers to take up to one year of unpaid pre- and postnatal leave. This is an important consideration, as sixty percent of the John Hancock work force is female. During management training seminars, facilitators stress the need to be sympathetic to employees' child care issues. The home office sponsors parenting seminars with child development experts to help parents select suitable recreational and educational activities for their children during the summer months when school is not in session. It also sponsors the Kids-To-Go program for school-age children, offering special activities during certain holidays and vacations when school is not in session.

Contact:

Les Hemmings
Vice President for Human Resources
John Hancock Mutual Life
POB 111 Floor T17
Boston, MA 02117
617/572-6845

Work/Family Directions, Inc.

Work/Family directions is a human resource consulting firm that provides a "SchoolSmart" service to Fortune 500 companies to give expert (educational specialist) advice to parents. Among the services offered are consultations with parents how best to help children succeed in school, how to evaluate school programs, and how to identify schools that meet their children's needs when moving to a new community. The firm's goal is to" reduce the barriers that stand between employees working productively and fulfilling their family needs."

Contact:

Fran Rodgers, President
Work/Family Directions, Inc.
930 Commonwealth Avenue West
Boston, MA 02215-1212
617/ 278-4000
FAX 617/ 566-2806

Michigan

Teaching-Learning Communities (T-LC) Mentor Program

The T-LC mentor program was established to offer at-risk students the guidance and motivation they need to stay in school. The majority of the mentors are senior citizens recruited from the community. Besides helping with academic tutoring, the mentors talk with the students about the importance of remaining drug and alcohol free, taking responsibility for their choices, and respecting the law and rights of other people. Currently, more than 200 mentors are working with the students on a one-on-one basis from one to five times every week.

Contact:

Carol H. Tice
Lifespan Resources, T-LC Mentors
1212 Roosevelt Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
313/994-4715

Minnesota

Minneapolis Covenant

Minneapolis Schools' Superintendent Peter Hutchinson has introduced a student contract, "The Minneapolis Covenant." It aims to hold accountable teachers, students, school staff and community members for academic improvement of the district's students.. Calling the student contract a "covenant" is intended to promote the idea that all members of the community are responsible for ensuring the educational success of its young people. Hutchinson has personally signed each of the 25,000 student contracts and they have been returned to the students and their families.

Contact:

Peter Hutchinson, Superintendent
Minneapolis School System
612/627-2010

Honeywell: New Vistas High School

Located at Honeywell corporate headquarters, this alternative program within the Minneapolis Public School system provides pregnant teens and teen mothers with a solid education program leading to a high school diploma while their babies and young children receive early health and developmental care. All students in the program work parttime in the day care center in exchange for academic credit. The program uses flexible teaching methods suited to the students' special academic needs. Individualized computer-assisted instruction is featured, allowing students to progress at their own pace and receive individualized attention from teachers, in addition to traditional classroom instruction. Professional and academic counselling is available to students in addition to part time internships offered by Honeywell. Other corporate sponsors and volunteer agency work cooperatively with Honeywell and the Minneapolis Public Schools to provide computers, software, and health care services.

Contact:

Chris Bremer
Honeywell Human Resources
Honeywell MN12-5131
POB 524
Minneapolis, MN 55410-0524
612/951-2066

Mississippi

Rolling Fork Elementary School: QEP Parent Involvement Project

The Quality Education Project offers schools a field-tested, professionally supervised, and site-tailored parent involvement program. Introduced at Rolling Fork Elementary School in 1989, the school is making efforts to continue the project components on an ongoing basis. The major components include a parent pledge, QEP student folders, parent seminars, a Back-to-School night, and a parent resource center. The program also encourages inservice training for administrators, teachers, and parents, resource manuals and other printed materials, as well as periodic evaluation.

Contact:

Mrs. Ethel Brown, Principal
QEP Parent Involvement Project
Rolling Fork Elementary School
600 South Parkway
Rolling Fork, MS 39159
(601) 873-4849

Natchez-Adams School District: Natchez-Adams Chapter 1 Parent Center

The Natchez-Adams Parent Center is staffed by a parent coordinator and two teacher assistants serving 3,500 students from 1,700 families. The major components of the program include teacher referrals to the Parent Center, the Parent Center Program, workshops for parents and teachers, a take home computer program, educational materials for home use, adult literacy classes, tutorial programs and a Learning Lab on Wheels. The program places emphasis on individualized learning plans for Chapter 1 children, positive parent-teacher conferences, and an orientation program for transition to middle school. The program strives to help parents increase their child's academic achievement, teach parenting skills and assist parents in raising their own educational level.

Contact:

Millicent Mayo, Parent Coordinator
Judy H. Sturdivant, Chapter 1 Coordinator
Chapter 1 Parent Center
Natchez-Adams School district
P.O. Box 1188
Natchez, MS 39121
(601) 445-2897/2819

Montana

Blackfeet Reservation: Headstart Start and Family Service Center

The Head Start Program and the Family Service Center are operated by a Parent Policy Board formed and directed by the Blackfeet Tribe. The major components of the program include Head Start, the Family Service Center, parent volunteers, parent participation in decision making, and home visits. Other services of the program included informing parents about opportunities for classes, jobs, and further education, parent empowerment, and a bilingual curriculum in the Head Start program.

Contact:

Susan Carlson, Family Service Center
Judy White, Head Start Program
Blackfeet Head Start Program and Family Service Center
P.O. Box 537
Browning, MT 59417
(406) 338-7411

Nebraska

Nebraska Housing Authority and Omaha Public Schools-Housing Project

Since 1986 study halls, computers, mentors and academic and recreational volunteers have been available to the large number of young people at risk of dropping out of school in the public housing projects. The housing authority and the schools work closely together on reducing truancy. For example, after a child is absent for two days, the school calls the parent and the housing authority staff. Families can be evicted from the project if their children do not attend school. Home visits are arranged to identify the root of the problem. Parent-teacher conferences are often held at the housing project.

Contact:

Nebraska Housing Authority
(402) 444-6419

New Mexico

Tomasita Elementary School

The parent involvement program at Tomasita Elementary School is located in a parent center within the school and has no paid staff. From 100 to 125 families participate in the activities while more than 200 parents are volunteers in the school. The program is operated with the belief that when people are involved in planning and operating a program they feel a sense of ownership which results in a more responsive program. Major program components include the parent volunteer program, the preschool program, "Families in Partnership" program, before- and after-school child care, summer day camp, and the Kinderproject. They program also operates a clothing bank and a food co-op program. teachers.

Contact:

Ms. Terry Toman, Principal
Tomasita Elementary School
701 Tomasita N.E.
Albuquerque, NM 87123
(505) 293-1230

New York

Buffalo Parents' Resource Center

Family resource centers are growing in popularity. They provide parenting information, offer classes or workshops for parents, and make social services and child care referrals. Some centers lend books, tapes and toys, coordinate home visits and translate materials into other languages. Many coordinate parent volunteers in schools and parent tutoring programs. One of the oldest operating centers is that in Buffalo. The Buffalo Parent Resource Center is located downtown in space donated by the Buffalo Urban League. The center offers parents a safe and comfortable environment for learning and engaging in learning activities with their children. The Center serves the important function of being a resource for parents who do not yet feel comfortable in a school setting.

Contact:

Howard Lewis, Director
716/ 851-3500

Boys and Girls Club of America: Children's Aid Program

The Children's Aid Program is a services-integration project in the Salome Urena Middle Academies in New York City's Washington Heights-Inwood area, a high-poverty, high-crime neighborhood with many limited English-proficient families. Emphasis of the program is placed on "one stop shopping" that gives parents and children quick, convenient, and comprehensive access to aid. For its part, the school encourages parent involvement: Over 1,000 parents serve in volunteer capacities in a school of 1,350 students, giving hearing and vision screening in the school's clinic and serving in a variety of support functions.

Contact:

Peter Moses
Children's Aid Society
212/949-4921

Ohio

Proctor & Gamble

Proctor & Gamble sponsors a mentor program, Project Aspire, that serves as the basis for a comprehensive education enrichment program in Woodward High School in Cincinnati, Ohio. The program mentors work with three groups: students who are in danger of dropping out of school, students who are planning to seek jobs after graduation from high school, and students who plan to go on to college.

Contact:

Paula Shaye Long
Manager, Community Affairs
The Proctor & Gamble Company
One Proctor & Gamble Plaza
Cincinnati, OH 45202
513/983-3663

Oregon

Bush Elementary School

Bush's parent involvement program grows and changes each year. In its work, the schoolwide parents group has chosen to focus on drug and alcohol abuse in families and community building. Parenting classes and family reading clubs are also part of Bush's schoolwide Chapter 1 program.

Contact:

Jennifer Bellman
Principal
Bush Elementary School
755 University
Salem, OR 97301
(503) 399-3134

Parents-Staff-Together--Richmond Elementary School

Since 1990, the school's state-acclaimed Parents-Staff-Together program has developed parental leadership through a two-year training program. The program is designed to promote communication between parents and school through monthly meetings held in parent homes. As a result of the program's great success, in 1991 it received the Governor's Volunteerism Award for exceptional parental involvement.

Contact:

Kathleen Bebe
Principal
Richmond Elementary School
466 Richmond Avenue, SE
Salem, OR 97391-6799
(503) 399-3180

Rhode Island

Hasbro: HIPPY

The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) begins with the tenet that all parents want the very best for their children and that all children can learn. The goals of the program include strengthening the parent/child relationship; promoting the concept of family; developing increased self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-confidence; and encouraging the participating parent's educational and employment goals. The program serves as a referral source to both community services and social service agencies.

Contact:

Mary Doyle
Pawtucket School Department
Park Place Box 388
Pawtucket, RI 02860
(401) 729-6510

South Dakota

Takini School: Woonspe Tiespaye (Family Education)

The parent involvement program operating at the Takini School is Family and Child Education (FACE). The FACE program is a family literacy program with four major components: Early Childhood, Parent Education, Parent and Child Time (PACT), and Adult Education. The program also encourages home visits and group/community meetings.

Contact:

Linda Hunter, Coordinator
Takini School
HC 77, Box 537
Howes, SD 57748
605/538-4399

Texas

Ft. Hood 2000 Parental Involvement Program: A Pilot Program

Lieutenant General Paul E. Funk, Commanding General of Ft. Hood, Texas in cooperation with the Killeen Independent School District has defined soldiers' place of duty as attending parent-teacher conferences twice every six weeks. The purpose of the program is "to increase parents' participation and involvement with the learning process and in the academic lives of their children." This program, featured at the satellite town meeting on parent involvement in June, 1994, is being piloted at an elementary and middle school on post. Its goal is to strengthen the connections between home and school for parents and children alike through these frequent 20-30 minute parent-teacher meetings. Preliminary data indicate great gains in achievement since the inception of the program.

Contact:

Tricia Christ, Director
FORT HOOD 2000
Family Support Division
Ft. Hood, TX 76544
817/287-0345

Robert E. Lee High School

School officials and police have worked together to address a serious gang problem: a school-day curfew was imposed as Lee High authorities implemented a "zero tolerance for gangs in the school policy." Lee administrators met with parents, students and community members outside of school to develop a cooperative strategy for identifying violent gang members and for keeping kids in schools. These efforts have resulted in significant academic achievement for the school.

Contact:

James Claypool
Principal
Robert E. Lee High School
6529 Beverly Hill
Houston, TX 77507
(713) 782-7310

Virginia

Even Start Program

Richmond Even Start works with approximately 50 families for 5-6 hours, four days per week. The large majority of the parents are single, African-American women from low socio-economic backgrounds. Parents join their children's preschool classroom each day to do activities together as part of "Parent and Child Time." Teachers help the parents master effective methods to help teach their children. Parents start each day with a half hour of "Life Lab": reading and discussing articles featured in the morning newspaper. Parents are also offered many services to improve their parenting skills and job readiness. Cultural trips and lunch programs are also featured.

Contact:

Janet Dolan
Even Start Program
119 West Leigh Street
Richmond, VA 23220
804/780-4388

Washington

The Volunteer Program

Seattle students are linked to volunteer tutors through a city-wide tutoring program. The Volunteer Program oversees several projects, including projects hosted by local churches where volunteers tutor students in a variety of academic areas from 2 to 4 hours per week. Some 650 adults participate as volunteer tutors. Other community partners include area universities and businesses. The Volunteer Project also conducts training sessions and publishes tutoring materials.

Contact:

Sally Morgan, Program Director
The Volunteer Project
POB 4235
Seattle, WA 98104
206/622-0998
FAX 206/622-0892

West Virginia

Atenville Elementary School: Parent as Educational Partners

Parent involvement in this small school in West Virginia was spearheaded by the former principal Peggy Adkins. The components of the program include: the Family Center, the Parent Phone Tree, Parent Educational Workshops, home visits, Satellite Tutoring Centers, Welcome Wagon, PTA, and Parent Volunteers. Atenville was accepted into the League of Schools Reaching Out, and received a small grant from the Institute for Responsive Education to implement the program.

Contact:

Mrs. Darlene Dalton, Principal
Atenville Elementary School
Rte. 2, Box 28
Harts, WV 25524
(304) 855-3173

Wisconsin

Each One Reach One

The Hillside Housing Project in Milwaukee is the home of the Each One Reach One program. Developed twelve years ago by June Perry, this mentor program carefully chose a location that would make it easy for the young black children living in the housing project to participate. The purpose of the program is to provide young boys and girls (ages 7 to 14) with role models. The mentors, black men and women, attend two-hour weekly meetings to discuss issues of importance like staying in school and the dangers of drugs and alcohol and the importance of self-esteem.

Contact:

June Martin Perry, Executive Director
New Concept Self-Development Center, Inc.
636 W. Kneeland St.
Milwaukee, WI 53212
(414) 444-1952

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION NEWS

FOR RELEASE: 1 p.m. EDT
September 7, 1994

Contact: Kathryn Kahler, David Frank
(202) 401-3026

RILEY CALLS FOR GREATER FAMILY INVOLVEMENT TO INCREASE LEARNING; ANNOUNCES NATIONWIDE PARTNERSHIP

WASHINGTON, Sept. 7 -- U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley today urged families to become more involved in their children's learning and announced the formation of a nationwide partnership to achieve that goal.

Speaking at the National Press Club, Riley said the U.S. Education Department would join with the 45-member National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE) and other organizations to place family involvement in learning high on the American agenda.

"The American family is the rock on which a solid education can and must be built," Riley said. "I have seen examples all over this nation where two-parent families, single parents, stepparents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles are providing strong family support for their children to learn."

Riley noted that one of the eight national education goals, enacted earlier this year as part of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, calls on schools to "promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement."

He said the partnership will advance that goal by:

o bringing together organizations and individuals working in this field;

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- o encouraging schools, businesses and communities to establish a supportive environment for family involvement;
- o conducting and sponsoring research showing the relationship between effective school practices and family involvement in learning;
- o identifying and publicizing outstanding examples of family involvement around the nation;
- o providing useful information to parents; and,
- o setting an example by encouraging federal employees to participate in their children's learning.

Riley released a research report documenting the importance of family involvement in learning. It "tells us, in no uncertain terms, that the essential building block for learning is how the American family uses its strength and power to support and encourage young people to meet the high expectations now being demanded of them in the classroom," Riley said.

The report, "Strong Families, Strong Schools," represents "a call to arms against ignorance and against low expectations," Riley said. It includes a summary of concrete examples to inspire parents to use the power and potential they have to truly shape their children's education.

The report points to 30 years of research showing that "greater family involvement in children's learning is a critical link to achieving a high-quality education and a safe, disciplined learning environment for every student." Citing research findings that parental participation improves students' learning "whether the child is in preschool or the upper grades, whether the family is rich or poor, whether the parents finished high school," the report concludes that family involvement must be "a special focus of any school improvement

-MORE-

effort."

The report notes that "three factors over which parents exercise authority -- student absenteeism, variety of reading materials in the home, and excessive television watching -- explain nearly 90 percent of the difference in performance between high- and low-achieving states."

A significant theme of the document is a review of existing public support for greater family involvement in learning:

- o 40 percent of parents believe they are not devoting enough time to their children's education;
- o teachers believe strengthening parents' roles in their children's learning must be the top issue in education policy;
- o nearly three-quarters of students aged 10 to 13 would like to talk to their parents more about schoolwork; and,
- o 89 percent of company executives find the lack of parental involvement the biggest obstacle to school reform.

In his remarks, Riley said he had found "a desire on the part of many groups across the political spectrum to coalesce around this vital issue that is so important to the well-being of this nation." Riley noted that he and his staff have met with 125 different parent, religious, business, education, civic and community-based organizations in developing the family involvement partnership for learning.

Pointing to the need for each of these groups to establish a supportive environment for family involvement in learning, he called on schools to make parents feel welcome and businesses to take steps that enable families to give attention to their children.

"The mismatch in how major American institutions -- from schools to businesses -- carve out time in the day-to-day life of the American family is to my mind a serious impediment to how our young people are growing up," Riley said.

"The best business leaders recognize that the early investment families make on behalf of their children leads to the promise of a skilled and educated workforce in the future," Riley said. "This is why the business leadership of America has been in the forefront of improving education for many years now."

Riley said he would promote seven good practices for families, including:

1) taking an inventory of how the family is using its time in order to find extra time so the family can learn together;

2) committing to high standards and setting high expectations to encourage children to reach their full potential;

3) limiting television viewing on a school night to no more than two hours;

4) reading together;

5) making sure children take academically challenging courses and scheduling daily time to make sure that homework is done;

6) making sure their child goes to school every day;

7) setting a good example and talking directly to teenagers and children in middle school about drugs, alcohol, and the values they want their children to have.

Riley said the family involvement partnership for learning is "the right way to go for America."

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Family Involvement — By the Numbers*

3	The age that children have acquired more than half the language they will use throughout their lives.
5,887,000	The projected enrollment increase in the number of K-12 students in public and private schools over the next 10 years.**
$453,000	The estimated increase in lifetime earnings for those with an associate's degree compared to a high school dropout.
50	The percentage of parents with children under age 9 who say they read to them every day.
52	The percentage of parental contacts with schools as of the first grade relating to a child's positive academic performance.
20	The percentage of parental contacts with schools as of the first grade that relate to negative academic performance.
33	The percentage of parental contacts with schools during the seventh grade that relate to negative performance.
31	The percentage of 17-year-olds in 1982 watching three or more hours of television per day.***
47	The percentage of 17-year-olds in 1992 watching three or more hours of television per day.***
31	The percentage of 17-year-olds in 1984 who read daily for fun.***
27	The percentage of 17-year-olds in 1992 who read daily for fun.***
47	The percentage of seventh-graders that watch three or more hours of television a day.
10	The number of hours per week of TV watching shown to negatively affect academic achievement.
73	The percentage of parents who want to limit their children's television viewing.
90	The percentage of the variation in eighth-grade math scores that is explained by three factors over which parents have authority — student absenteeism, variety of reading material in the home, and excessive TV watching.
8.7 billion	Number of hours that American parents would spend supporting their children's reading if every parent of a child aged 1-9 read or worked on his or her child's schoolwork five days a week.
$230 billion	Amount of money this would represent if teachers spent that same time.

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82	The percentage of America's prisoners who are high school dropouts.****
3 million	Number of thefts and violent crimes that occur on or near school campuses every year.
20	The percentage of all students in grades 9-12 who reported they had carried a weapon at least once during the previous month.
71	The percentage of high-income neighborhoods that offer after-school activities for kids 11-14.
23	The percentage of low-income neighborhoods that offer the same type of activities.
33	The percentage of parents of first-graders who serve as school or classroom volunteers.
8	The percentage of parents of seventh-graders who serve as school or classroom volunteers.
40	The percentage of Americans over 60 now in some voluntary activity at least 2 hours a week.
23,000	Number of volunteers in 1992 in the Foster Grandparents Program.
89,000	Number of children, including illiterate, abused and neglected children, pregnant teens, juvenile delinquents and children with disabilities, who were served by Foster Grandparents in 1992.
26	The percentage of large employers that offer seminars on parenting issues and involvement.
55	The percentage of large companies that take advantage of federal tax law by offering Dependent Care Assistance plans, which allow employees to set aside up to $5,000 of their pre-tax salaries for child care expenses.
25,000	The number of covenants signed by Peter Hutchinson, superintendent of the Minneapolis School System, that secured commitments to education from students, teachers, school staff, administrators, and community members.
99	The percentage of parents who have some productive contact with their child's school in McAllen, Texas, where there was a districtwide parent involvement program.
$25	Estimated yearly cost per student for a school to develop a viable parent-school program.
$10	Estimated yearly cost per pupil for a school district to establish a structure to improve school and family connections.
$5	Estimated yearly cost per pupil for a state to establish the same type of system.

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*All figures cited, except where noted, are found in "Strong Families, Strong Schools, Building Community Partnerships for Learning," 1994, Department of Education.

**Digest of Education Statistics, 1993, Department of Education.

***1994 National Assessment of Educational Progress, Department of Education.

****A Demographic Look at Tomorrow, Institute for Educational Leadership, Inc. (1992)

NATIONAL COALITION FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS	TELEPHONE
Academy for Educational Development	202-862-1900
American Association of School Administrators	703-528-0700
American Federation of Teachers	202-879-4400
ASPIRA	202-835-3600
Association for Supervison and Curriculum Development	703-549-9110
CeDAR	202-223-1593
Center for Law and Education	202-986-3000
Center for the Study of Parent Involvement	510-254-0110
Center For Revitalization of Urban Education, National Education Association	202-822-7015
Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning	410-516-0370
Council for Exceptional Children	703-620-3660
Council of Chief State School Officers	202-336-7007
Council of the Great City Schools	202-393-2427
Education Publishing Group	617-542-6500
ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education	212-678-3433
Family Resource Coalition	312-341-0900
Family Service America	202-347-1124
Grandparents Network, America Association for Retired Persons	202-434-2288
Hispanic Policy Development Project	202-822-8414
Home and School Institute	202-466-3633
Institute for Educational Leadership	202-822-8405
Institute for Responsive Education	617-353-3309
International Reading Association	202-624-8800
National Association for the Education of Young Children	202-232-8777
National Association of State Boards of Education	703-684-4000
National Association of School Psychologists	202-806-5196
National Association of Elementary School Principals	703-684-3345
National Association of Partners in Education	703-836-4880
National Association of State Directors of Vocational Technical Education	202-328-0216
National Association of Secondary School Principals	703-860-0200 Ext.245
National Black Child Development Institute	202-387-1218
National Coalition of Title I/Chapter 1 Parents	202-547-9286
National Community Education Association	703-359-8973
National Council of La Raza	202-289-1380
National Dropout Center	803-656-2599
National Head Start Association	703-739-0870
National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities	202-884-8200
National PTA	703-644-7333
National Urban League	212-310-9000
Parents for Public Schools	202-778-6323
Quality Education for Minorities Network	202-659-1818
RaSaun and Associates (Bob Witherspoon)	703-558-4800
School Council Assistance Project	803-777-7658
The Parent Institute	703-569-9842

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NATIONAL FAMILY INVOLVEMENT PARTNERS

The following organizations have joined the informal network of partners that comprise the national Family Involvement Partnership:

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education

Academy for Educational Development
American Association of School Administrators
American Federation of Teachers
Aspira
Association for Supervision of Curriculum Development
CeDAR
Center for Law and Education
Center for Revitalization of Urban Education, National Education Association
Center for the Study of Parent Involvement
Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning
Council for Exceptional Children
Council of Chief State School Officers
Council of the Great City Schools
Education Today
ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education
Family Resource Coalition
Family Service America
Grandparents Network, American Association for Retired Persons
Hispanic Policy Development Project
Home and School Institute
Institute for Educational Leadership
Institute for Responsive Education
International Reading Association
National Association for the Education of Young Children
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Partners in Education
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Association of State Directors of Vocational Technical Education
National Black Child Development Institute
National Coalition of Title I/Chapter 1 Parents
National Community Education Association
National Council of La Raza

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National Dropout Center
National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities
National PTA
National Urban League
Parents for Public Schools
Quality Education for Minorities Network
RaSaun and Associates (Bob Witherspoon)
School Council Assistance Project
The Parent Institute

Community-Based Organizations

Boys & Girls Clubs of America
Children's Aid Society
Girls Scouts of America
YMCA of USA
Youth Guidance of Chicago
AFL/CIO
Optimist International
National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations